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LETTERS
UNDER THE SIGNATURES OF
SENEX,
AND OF
A FARMER,
COMPREHENDING AN EXAMINATION
OF THE
CONDUCT OF OUR EXECUTIVE,
TOWARDS
FRANCE AND GREAT BRITAIN,
OUT OF WHICH THE PRESENT CRISIS HAS ARISEN,
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE NORTH AMERICAN.

To what end should the conqueror spare us? Our virtue and undaunted spirit are crimes in his eyes, and will render us more obnoxious. Our remote situation, hitherto the retreat of freedom, and on that account the more suspected, will serve only to inflame the jealousy of our enemies.—TACITUS.

BALTIMORE:

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GREAT public exigencies, in free governments, have always called forth great virtue and talents. Thus the passing occurrences of the day prove, that the lapse of twenty-five years has not turned our nation aside from that salutary vigilance of their rulers and jealousy of their rights, without which our government could not have been established nor continued.

Should we survive the fraud, prejudice and power, which have conspired for our ruin, we shall not owe it more to the timely illustrations of the sage, and the heroic devotion of the patriot, than to native good sense and unalterable attachment to liberty in the body of the people. We have here another proof, that the American nation is as conspicuous for its intelligence, as for its civil system, and its unalterable adherence to national freedom. The late attempts upon both, have electrified the whole country. The aged, the retired, the timid, the wavering, and the deluded, have all been brought into the ranks of that phalanx, which is determined to save the country. By such exertions, it must be saved !

Among the pens which have powerfully contributed to this conservatory alarm, is the able and ingenuous author of the subjoined letters. His fascinating candor and vigorous argument, have chased away the sophistry and premeditated delusions, with which the Hand of Power has covered its sinister purposes and our danger. These explanations of our public affairs, in a conjuncture which has involved the life and death of our enviable political constitution, will be long admired. The crisis which called them forth, is alone more interesting, than the dignity of the writer is venerable, and his capacity exalted.



SENEX.

NO. I.

ALTHOUGH long since withdrawn from those active political scenes, in which I once took an anxious part, I find it impossible to remain an uninterested, though I have been many years a silent spectator of passing events. The transactions of the day involve objects too important to this western world, too vitally essential to the independence of the United States, to leave it possible for any man, who justly appreciates that independence, to view them with unconcern.—However age may have slackened the course of that vital current, which once rushed impetuously through his veins, or retirement have enabled him to contemplate without emotion, the low intrigues and vile stratagems of party, the real patriot can never cease to feel for his country; nor can he see her hurried to the brink of that precipice, to dash over which is death, without raising his warning voice to announce her danger. That voice may be disregarded—he may anticipate the neglect it will experience—but he will do what he thinks his duty.

Never, since the all-subduing legions of ancient Rome carried conquest and chains to the remotest regions of the earth, has human liberty been so nearly banished from the world, has national sovereignty been so nearly swallowed up, by one immense military despotism, as at the present moment.

In less than ten years, more has been done than is now to be atchieved.—Since her present emperor seized

the reins of the government in France, a much greater military force has been subjected to his power, than remain, to be subdued.

That Europe, if united and directed by one great mind, is able to give laws to the rest of the world has never been doubted. What is now wanted to complete that union? Those vast powers, which formerly checked and balanced each other, exist no longer, or exist only to employ the remnant of their strength in executing the mandates of their conqueror. Even Russia obeys his will, and at the nod of Napoleon, weakly and wickedly directs her disgraced arms against her most faithful and most honourable friend. A submissive continent has received his yoke, and is ready to waste its treasures, and to pour out its blood in his service.*

What arrests the application of this immense force to the residue of the world? What secures a single spot of our earth from those chains, which are prepared for all, and which have been imposed on all, whom the colossal power of France has been able to reach? What prevents the perfect union of Europe, and the consequent subjugation of the rest of the globe?

No American is too ignorant to give the true answer to these questions—Destroy the preponderance of the British navy; place the dominion of the sea in the hands of him who rules the land; enable Bonaparte to waft his countless legions to whatever shores he may direct them, and the most uninformed of my fellow citizens, the most obsequious and infatuated advocate of that fatal system, which so steadily pursues this object,

* The present manly exertions of Spain, so honourable to the people of that country, and so disgraceful to their rulers, will, I fear, give no permanent check to the progress of French domination. It is much to be apprehended, that this late assertion of national independence, made by a gallant people, who had been betrayed by their government, will terminate in a bloody proscription, of which all that is noble and patriotic, will become the victims. Certainly, without the aid of England, not the most romantic chivalry could hope for success.

must feel that the last barrier to the universal empire of one man, is removed.

I do not think it necessary to prove this proposition. It is one of those self-evident truths, which, like an axiom in mathematics, carries conviction with it. No mind can resist its intrinsic demonstration.

What then is the course which America ought to pursue? What does her interest dictate? What will rescue her liberty from impending danger? What will best secure her independence?

These are questions most deeply interesting to us all, and on which it behoves us all most seriously to reflect.

To those who guide the councils of the nation, it belongs, to mark out the nation's course, and I shall not presume to say, what that course ought to be. But this I will venture to affirm—the most deadly foe of American independence, the most malignant enemy of human liberty, can devise nothing so certainly fatal to that independence, nothing so inevitably destructive of that liberty, as impairing the maritime strength of Britain, and thus transferring the dominion of the seas, from an island incapable of becoming a great military power, to a sovereign who already wields almost the whole military force of the European continent.

Why then should America throw her weight into the scale already so preponderant? Why does she endeavor to augment a power which already threatens to overwhelm the whole human race? Why should she place additional means in the hands of the greatest soldier of the age, who is at the same time the most stern, systematic, cruel and unrelenting tyrant with whom an angry Heaven has ever scourged a sinning world? Why should she endeavor to put beneath his feet the only obstacle to the full accomplishment of his ambitious schemes?

I know not why America should pursue these objects. That every motive which ought to influence human conduct, should impel her in a contrary direction, and inspire her with different wishes, appears to be so obvious, that I reluctantly credit the clearest evidence which is continually flowing in upon me in support of the fact.

Yet I am compelled to credit it. I am compelled to believe, that those who now administer the government, either feel prejudices in favour of France, and against England, which have determined them to put in hazard the independence of their country, by becoming the ally of the former in a war, undertaken and carried on for the extermination of the latter ; or they believe that England must sink, that the attempt to defend our independence must then inevitably fail, and that it has become the part of wisdom to diminish the severity of slavery, by courting in time the favor of our master.

If, in these opinions, my fellow citizens concur with their rulers, desperate indeed is their situation, and vain would be any attempt of mine, to arouse their nobler feelings. But I cannot yet believe, that the spirit of '76 is entirely extinguished. I cannot yet believe that America has wrested the right of self-government from a parent state, whose laws are the freest and mildest of Europe, from whom we derive the wisest and the soundest institutions, as well as the best guards of liberty, in order to surrender that inestimable privilege to an unfeeling military despot, in whose hands rewards, bribes, chains, confiscation and death, are instruments, which, in the execution of his plans, he uses with absolute cold-blooded indifference.

I shall, therefore, devote a few numbers to the purpose of inviting the attention of my countrymen, to some of the most conspicuous of those facts, which appear to me to demonstrate the existence of that baneful system, which I have ascribed to those in power.

SENEX.

NO. II.

I HAVE said, that those, who rule our councils, have been regularly and systematically urging the nation into the arms of France, by plunging us into a war with Britain. The mode, by which alone this pernicious object can be effected, is too apparent to be mistaken. The power of peace and war being essentially in the people, their minds must be prepared for war, before they can be engaged in one. It is not by openly avowing the design, that this can be accomplished. The people of this country are disinclined to war, and an open direct avowal of a wish to involve them in one, might defeat its own purpose. It is by rousing the angry passions; by exasperating those keen resentments, which have been excited against a foreign nation, that the Americans are to be prepared to wage war upon that nation. It is by exaggerating the injuries inflicted by Britain; by concealing, softening, and even denying those heaped upon us by France; by misrepresenting the conduct of those powers, and misstating their views, that America is to be induced to facilitate the imposition of manacles on herself, by uniting with the latter to hasten the downfall of the former.

Who has not perceived the too successful industry with which this baneful system has been pursued?

I will not invite my fellow citizens to look back to 1793, and to follow the man on whom the people have bestowed their confidence, from that period to the present. I will not invite them to recollect the ardent and persevering zeal, with which those men continued to defend the right of France to exercise, in this country, the choicest attributes of sovereignty; nor will I call their attention to the malignant rage with which the best patriots of our country were pursued, for defending that sovereignty. But it will be useful to advert to one fact, which appears to have escaped the public attention, and which is of some importance in marking the temper of those who govern public opinion. It is this: In the measures adopted by the belligerent powers, which are deemed injurious to this country, France has generally taken the lead. For the purpose of ex-

asperation, the past offences of Great Britain are frequently recapitulated. Among them is the order of the 9th of June, 1793. Neither the subsequent treaty, nor the ample compensation we have received for captures made under that order, can erase it from our catalogue of injuries. Our resentments are still to be excited by it. Yet we are never told, that in the preceding month, a decree still less defensible in principle, still more injurious to our rights, was made by the government of France. We are never told, that for the captures under this and other decrees of the same power, which subjected to confiscation every vessel sailing under the American flag, no compensation has ever been made.—Degrading to our government and to our nation, as have, and continue to be, the claims and practices of France, we are never reminded of this, or of any other fact which might disclose to us our real situation, whilst every measure adopted by a nation struggling for her own liberty, in which ours is involved, is presented to us in the most odious colours, and dilated upon with an assiduity which never relaxes.

I shall not rely on the conduct of those now in power, while they constituted an opposition, but shall pass to those transactions, which manifest the temper with which they have administered our national affairs.

In the United States, as in all popular governments, public opinion is in a great measure regulated by the Press. It is, of consequence, the vehicle by which the government conveys to the people those sentiments which it wishes to inculcate. In those presses, therefore, which enjoy the sunshine of ministerial favor and patronage, which are professedly devoted to the support of the administration, and to the furtherance of its designs, we may look with confidence for the certain expression of the ministerial will. All have perceived with what unwearied diligence these presses have laboured to diffuse through the mass of the people, a most rancorous and envenomed hate of England, while every fact, which might open their eyes to the real dangers to be apprehended from France, has been carefully kept out of view. No man, who will look into these papers, and they have been read with par-

tiality by a great majority of the community, can refuse his assent to the truth, that the ruling sentiment which pervades them is hostility to England, and a consequent accordance with the views of France. I will not cite paragraphs to illustrate the truth of this assertion. I make it fearless of contradiction. The columns of the papers alluded to, are replete with evidences of the fact; and those who are not satisfied of its verity, would require some proof auxiliary to his own splendour, that the sun shines at mid-day. No man can inspect the Aurora, the National Intelligencer, the Enquirer, or any other paper enjoying the favour of administration, without perceiving one unvarying effort to lead the American people into a war with England.

I do not mention this fact as one which has not been observed by others, for there are few who have not felt its influence, but for the purpose of requesting the attention of my fellow citizens to its origin and intended effect.

Can it be believed, that papers which are deemed semi-official, which are known to devote themselves to the service of the administration, and to partake of its bounty, would continually urge a system which that administration disapproved? It cannot be believed. No man can hesitate to admit, that the press is a powerful engine, wielded by the government skilfully, and with immense effect, for the promotion of its favourite object.

If the means constantly employed have a certain and obvious tendency to produce a particular end, that end must be desired by those who employ the means.—Who then can resist the conclusion, that a war with Britain is most anxiously desired by that administration, under whose auspices the means calculated to produce it, are so unremittingly employed?

Let it not be said, that it is unjust to ascribe to the administration, opinions which may be propagated by the editors of news-papers, or that the fact is in itself too unimportant to form the basis of so serious a charge, as a desire to involve the nation in a war, which, without the interposition of Providence, must terminate in the subjugation of this once free and happy country. The

favour of government would be infallibly withdrawn from papers, which obstinately persisted in opposing its views ; and no man is so ignorant of the influence of the press, as to deem it an unimportant instrument in effecting great political objects. By no men in existence, is its capacity more justly appreciated, than by those whom it has elevated to almost unlimited power, and who now use it as a mean to excite our hostility against England.

It is then a most serious and a most infallible proof of the spirit by which the present administration is actuated. It is one which demands the solemn consideration of the American people.

SENEX.

NO. III.

From the opinions incessantly inculcated through the press, that powerful engine, by which governments operate most efficaciously on the minds of the people, I have inferred the spirit of hostility to England and devotion to France, by which our administration is actuated. I am now about to call the attention of my fellow citizens to another circumstance, which, to my mind, is not less convincing.

In the United States there will always be men who devote themselves to the president. They utter opinions which they believe to be his, and maintain those propositions which they believe him to advocate. Of these some are known to be in his confidence, and to derive immediately from himself the ideas which they communicate. From these intermediaries, others are content to receive their instructions, and the assignment of the parts they are respectively to perform. Through this medium, not indeed so extensively as through the press, but to a very great extent, does an administration also develope its designs.

Beyond the range of my own observation I pretend not to speak; but within that range, I can confidently aver, that among those devoted to the administration, I have scarcely heard an individual, who did not breathe the most envenomed hate to England. They appear to think this sentiment the test of patriotism, and an unerring proof of merit. Their utmost influence is exerted to render it the common sentiment of the nation. Many, in plain terms, speak of war as proper, and all use that language which leads to war. My fellow citizens will judge from their own observation, whether this fact exists in the same degree in other circles, as it does in that in which it has been my lot to move. I believe it does exist in the same, or at least in a very great degree. If in this I am correct, does not the fact conclusively demonstrate the temper of the administration? Can it be believed, that those who almost idolize our executive, who applaud all his opinions, and all his measures, who dissent in nothing even from his caprices, who perceive in him only the purest virtue and the

most sublime intelligence, can all differ essentially from him on a subject more interesting than any other to this country, his opinions on which have marked his whole political course?

Although I should not be pardoned the prolixity of an attempt to enumerate the various circumstances which support this allegation, I may be permitted to refer, for its more particular illustration, to two papers which have been highly extolled by the friends of the administration, and which may be safely considered as detailing its sentiments. One is the letter of Mr. John Q. Adams to a senator of Massachusetts—the other is the letter of Mr. Wilson C. Nicholas to his constituents.

To those who are not personally acquainted with these gentlemen, their political characters must be in some measure known. Mr. Adams, the son of the late president, is generally deemed a man of talents, and of extensive information. The foul injustice with which his honourable father has been pursued, even in his retirement, and the atrocious calumnies which have been heaped upon that venerable patriot, by those now in power, have not restrained this gentleman from allying himself closely with them, nor from supporting their political system, with a zeal, which not unfrequently outstrips his judgment. Since his conversion, he is understood to possess a considerable portion of executive confidence, and to be intrusted with at least a general knowledge of its views. Indeed, his talents entitle him to a respectable station in any party, and it is not to be presumed, that he would rush with so much impetuosity into any system, the object of which he did not comprehend.

Mr. Nicholas is the neighbour of the president, and has been long known to be his intimate and confidential friend. While in the senate of the United States, no man was supposed to be more certainly in the secrets of the cabinet; and, in the house of representatives, the favour of the executive is not understood to have deserted him.

In the deliberate opinions of these gentlemen, given under their own signatures, and prepared for the peo-

ple of the United States, we may look for the sentiments of that administration, to which they are understood to be devoted, and to defend whose system their letters were written.

It is not my intention to analyze these letters, or to expose to my fellow citizens the fallacies they contain. They are in the possession of all who read, and I refer to them, for the sole purpose of marking the inveterate hate of England by which they were dictated, the solicitude which they manifest to hide from the public eye the aggressions of France, and the anxiety they discover to apologize for those aggressions, which cannot be concealed.

I appeal to any American who reads those letters, for the truth of the declaration, when I say, that the man who derived his knowledge of facts from them alone, would believe that war with Great Britain had become necessary. He would believe that England was the natural and inveterate enemy of this country; that the destruction of her maritime superiority, would be the epoch from which might be dated the commercial liberty and prosperity of these United States; that in the invasions made by the belligerents on our neutral rights, she had uniformly taken the lead; and that even the Berlin and Milan decrees, even the seizure of our property, and the absolute controul which France claims to exercise over our government, if not rendered entirely inoffensive, were greatly palliated by the superior atrocities of British insolence and injustice.

These opinions lead directly to war. They could never be so strenuously inculcated, by men whose actions usually accorded with their opinions, but for the purpose of leading the public mind to war. And on whom is this war to be made? On the only people of Europe who possess a single remnant of liberty, and on the only nation of the world, which arrests the rapid progress of Bonaparte to universal dominion.

SENEX.

NO. IV.

So openly and so uniformly have those who govern the United States, manifested their hate of England and their love of France, so deeply is this sentiment felt, and so boldly is it expressed, that in showing its existence, I am only proving what is publicly avowed. The passion is deemed meritorious, and the man who would deny it to the administration, would probably be pronounced a calumniator, from whose imputations it would be rescued by its friends. Yet I shall mention some other transactions, of a still more serious nature than those already stated, which appear to originate in, and seem designed to promote, that spirit of prejudice which leads to war.

The measure to which I shall first advert, is the act of congress commonly denominated the non-intercourse law.

This act is a direct attack upon the commerce and manufactures of Great Britain. It cuts off a very important part of her trade with this country, and prohibits the importation from her dominions of a great number of articles in high demand, the introduction of which, from her enemies, is allowed.

It has been said, that this is a commercial regulation, and that we have a right, as an independent nation, to regulate our own commerce.

I mean not to deny the right. Neither can it be denied, that we have a right to make war. I do not refer to this measure, as one in which the government has transcended its power, but as one in which it has exercised its acknowledged rights, in a manner extremely hostile to one of the belligerents, and as favorable to the views of the other. It is not to be doubted, that commercial regulations may be so framed pending a war, as to deprive the nation framing them, of its neutral character. A nation has certainly a right to refuse all communication with one neighbour, and to preserve a free trade with another; but the exercise of this right, especially in the midst of a furious exterminating war, could scarcely fail to be deemed an act of hostility.

In explaining the principle of this measure, I shall not depart from that brevity which I have prescribed for myself, further than is necessary to be intelligible.

The states of Europe have concurred in the exclusion of all others from participating with the mother country in the trade of her colonies. This commercial monopoly has become a part of their law of nations. The carriage of colonial produce, like the coasting trade, is confined to the vessels of the country. Without examining the abstract justice of this rule, I content myself with observing, that it is a rule which has received the assent of the commercial world.

During the last and the present war, England has acquired such a superiority at sea, as almost to banish the flag of her enemy from the ocean. On the advantage resulting from this circumstance, she funds her principal hope of obtaining a secure peace; and is, of course, peculiarly alive to any measure which may diminish the effects of that advantage.

Disabled by the pressure of a maritime war, from carrying on her accustomed commerce, France has relaxed those restrictions, which, in common with the other nations of Europe, she had imposed on her colonial trade; and has called in the aid of neutrals, to waft to the mother country that produce, which, in time of peace, had been carried exclusively in her own vessels.

This state of things produced a contest between Great Britain and the neutral powers. The former contended, that in point of strict right, she might legitimately prevent the interference of neutrals, to diminish the effect of her arms. The latter insisted on the right to carry on any commerce, not contraband, to which the government of the nation with which it was carried on, would admit them. Without receding from these opposite pretensions, the parties seemed, in practice, by a kind of tacit agreement, to meet on middle ground. Great Britain permitted the circuitous and interrupted the direct trade between France and her colonies.

For a time, landing the goods in the United States, and reshipping them, was considered in the British

courts of admiralty, as evidence of the circuitous trade, but it was soon discovered or alleged, that under this thin veil, a practice prevailed, which was, in effect, equivalent to the real direct carriage of colonial produce to the mother country. The English government thereupon declared, that their tribunals should not be precluded, by this cover, from examining into the fact, and deciding according to the truth of the case. This declaration produced much discontent in the United States ; and at the commencement of the discussions to which it gave birth, between the two governments, the non-intercourse law was passed, avowedly as a measure of coercion.

On the policy of this act I shall be silent. I mean only to remark on its hostile aspect towards Britain.

The two nations differed on a principle on which each claimed to be in the right, and neither could justifiably impeach the sincerity of the other. Under such circumstances, it is usual to resort, in the first instance, to negotiation, and if it be found impracticable to effect an amicable arrangement of the matter in controversy, then, and not till then, is it customary for the aggrieved nation to do justice to itself, and to adopt those measures of reprisal, which, in its own opinion, the exigency may require. A resort to coercion in the first instance, unless the offence had been so clear and so serious as not to admit of negotiation, or unless it be in the case of some conqueror, who, in the insolence of power, forgets right, was, I believe, without a precedent in the history of civilized Europe. Nothing could be more indicative of an indisposition to be on friendly terms with the nation against whom the measure was directed.

This hasty and violent step on the part of the United States, was the more remarkable, as, in our intercourse with the enemies of Britain, we had not only forbore to do justice to ourselves, but had been signally moderate in our conduct under injuries, which were unquestionable in their nature, and weighty in their degree.

This act was denied to be a measure of hostility. In its character it is completely so. Whether we consider its motive or its object, it is an act of reprisals; and if we reflect on its operation, on the nature of existing war, and on the views of the belligerents at the time, it is not only an act of reprisals, but is of a nature peculiarly offensive.

It is obviously the opinion of the enemies of Great Britain, that the resources which enable her to prosecute that war, which she now wages for her existence, are derived from her extensive commerce. As these resources are impaired, her means of defence are enfeebled, and the probability of her being able to preserve her own liberty, with the loss of which ours must perish, is proportionably diminished.— Acting upon this opinion, the tyrant of the continent, by a course of violence and oppression, to which man in no other period of his history, ever submitted, has endeavoured to annihilate their commerce. In those countries to which his power extends, he has carried this system into execution, with a rigour which has reduced millions to poverty; and where his power is not yet felt, his influence has been exerted to produce a co-operation in this favourite plan, the success of which is to confirm him master of the world.

That the opinion entertained on this subject by the emperor of France, is also entertained by those who rule the United States, has been repeatedly and publicly avowed. It has been assigned as an inducement to the measures which have been adopted, and the authors of those measures have openly vaunted, that their system would soon bring Great Britain to their feet.

This act of reprisal then, made, contrary to usage, while a doubtful claim was under discussion, is understood by ourselves, and is understood by France, to be a most vital blow, aimed at the maritime power of Great Britain. It is aimed at a time, when she is struggling against the greatest potentate in the

universe for her existence. It is calculated to disable her from prosecuting a contest, on the event of which depends the question, whether liberty shall be an empty sound, or a substantial good.

The tendency of such a measure, the hostile spirit in which it originated, and the influence under which it was adopted, will be perceived by all who reflect on public transactions.

SLAVER.

NO. V.

THAT spirit of enmity towards England, and of devotion to France, which has long animated the rulers of the United States, which they have successfully laboured to transfuse into the bosoms of the people, and by which the non-intercourse law was dictated, did not exhaust itself in that favourite measure. It continued to manifest itself in our councils, and its influence was consequently felt in the negotiations between the two countries.

The personal attachment of our late minister at London to the president of the United States, is of public notoriety. It was formed in his youth, and is one of those principles which have steadily guided his political course. It is not to be expected that he will disclose his full knowledge on this delicate subject ; yet his communications evince his opinion, that, had a real spirit of conciliation existed on the part of our administration, an accommodation of all the differences between the two nations, might certainly have been accomplished, in a manner which ought to be perfectly satisfactory to the American government. Indeed, it is impossible to contemplate the real situation of Great Britain, without feeling the conviction, that to the United States, viewed as a friendly power, nothing could be refused, which ought to be asked. As a friendly power, we could not demand a surrender of those principles, on the preservation of which, her maritime ascendancy, and consequently her existence, depend. Of this description are believed to be the right of search, and the right of impressment. The right of search at sea, is sanctioned by a long course of general usage, and the right to impress from merchantmen her own seamen, seduced from her service, is supported by arguments which have not yet been refuted. The abuse of this right is not defended, and ought to be guarded against ; but its use is of the first importance, unless its relinquishment could be compensated by regulations, which on our part would be

faithfully executed, which would secure the restoration of deserters, and prevent the employment of her seamen in our merchant service : the exercise of this right is essential to the manning of those fleets which protect Great Britain from a degree of oppression, which might almost efface from our memory the cruelties, the outrages, and the exactions, of which unoffending Portugal is the last wretched victim. We ought not to wish its relinquishment, unaccompanied by such arrangements ; nor ought we to expect, that a satisfactory adjustment of so delicate a subject can be made, without stipulations which shall secure the execution of our part of the contract.

Yet it is understood to be the silence observed upon these points, and the note of the British ministers relative to the Berlin decree, which are the ostensible motives for rejecting, without even consulting the senate, the treaty lately negotiated with Great Britain.

The perseverance with which the administration continues to demand, as indispensable to any treaty, the formal surrender of rights essential to the safety of the British nation, is complete evidence of a determination not to conclude a treaty with them, during the present war. This circumstance will make the deeper impression, if it be recollected, that when the mission of Mr. Jay was announced by that great man, who so well understood, and so uniformly pursued the true interests of his country, all negotiation with England was reprobated by the party which now governs the United States, as being justly offensive to France.

Previous to the signature of this treaty, the Berlin decree was received. It was made after the victory of Jena had fixed the iron yoke of France on Prussia and the German empire. Elated with this immense accession of power, the exulting conqueror proclaimed the British dominions in a state of blockade, subjected to capture and condemnation all articles of the growth or manufacture of those dominions, although they should be the property, and be in the possession of neutrals, and closed his own ports against every vessel which had visited those of England.

At his order, the vassal monarchs around him, adopted the same measure. A more flagrant violation of his own solemn engagements, or a more insulting outrage on the established rights of neutrals, and on the acknowledged law of nations, is not to be conceived. It could only have proceeded from a man, who, feeling his own power, was not only totally regardless of neutrals, but was confident that they dared not assert their rights. It evinces his conviction, that the influence he possessed in their cabinets, was sufficient to restrain them from resenting an injury, for which no precedent can be found in the annals of modern Europe.

The result has shown, that he was not mistaken.—Awed into submission by the terror he inspired, neutrals have crouched beneath his uplifted arm, and have received, without a murmur, the lash of their master.

The direct object of this atrocious usurpation, was Great Britain. Unable to subdue that last asylum of national independence and of human liberty, in Europe, while defended by her hitherto invincible fleets, he sought to unman them, by drying up the sources of her revenue: One of the most operative means of effecting this end, was the prevention of the use of her manufactures in foreign countries. The violence of the measure, the injury it inflicted on those whom he had no pretext for injuring, and no right to controul, when weighed against the gratification of a vindictive and unlimited ambition, was as dust in the balance.

From the cabinet of London, the object of this extraordinary decree could not be concealed, nor could its consequences be disregarded by them. If permitted to go quietly into operation, it would necessarily transfer the whole commerce that was carried on in neutral bottoms, from her ports to those of her enemy. Let the voyage to the continent be safe, while that to the British dominions is full of hazard, and the inevitable result must be, either that this whole trade will be diverted to the continent, or that the portion of it which still continues in its old channel, will be

burthened with expences, which must render it scarcely worth pursuing.

As this unjustifiable encroachment on the sovereign rights of neutrals, was at the same a palpable invasion of their independence, an essential injury to their prosperity, and a total derangement of individual industry, Britain might reasonably have indulged the hope, that those whose situations placed them beyond the immediate reach of the great enemy of the human race, would not tamely submit to so degrading a measure. If disappointed in this hope, it was not to be expected, that in a struggle for existence, she would unresistingly permit to her enemy this illegitimate employment of neutrals, as the efficacious, though negative instruments of war, against her. It was to be expected, that she would oppose this tyrannical system, by such a counter system as a sound and well considered policy might dictate.

To those nations with whom Great Britain had existing treaties, it was her duty to announce this necessary determination; and it would have been correct in them, candidly to avow the course they designed to pursue. With the United States, the articles of a treaty had just been agreed on, and the instrument was about to be signed. To affix to it the signature of the commissioners, without a notification of the influence, which this extravagant decree might have on the future conduct of Great Britain, would have been a concealment which might be understood to imply a waver of the right to adopt retaliating measures, and which might, on the adoption of those measures, subject her to the imputation of insincerity and breach of faith. It was, therefore, the dictate of candour and of honour, to make a frank declaration, previous to the completion of the national compact, then about to be laid before the two governments.

As this declaration only expressed a confidence, that the United States would pursue such a course as was required by their own dignity; and announced no more on the part of Great Britain, than a determination to take those measures which the exigency and her own

safety might require, it could furnish to a friendly and independent power no motive for rejecting the treaty which it accompanied.

If, as is generally believed, the treaty was rejected by the president on the grounds which have been stated, it must be considered as strong, if not conclusive evidence, not only of those foreign prejudices, of which there are so many other proofs, but of a subserviency to France, for which it is difficult to assign any adequate motive, compatible with the independence of the United States.

How painful must be the feelings of a genuine American, who reflects that to extort from Britain the surrender of rights essential to her existence, and consequently to our liberty, we have co-operated with the tyrant of the earth, in a system of hostility against her commerce ; while the most direct attacks on our unquestionable rights, and the most open invasions of our sovereignty, on the part of that tyrant, so far from exciting in our government any sentiment of resistance, cannot even suspend its efforts to exasperate to a still higher pitch our resentments against a power, which, by a gullant nation, at length roused by oppression, has been emphatically and justly termed "the shield of oppressed humanity !"—With what indignation must such a man find, in the editors of those presses which are the vehicles of executive will, not a mere insensibility to these wrongs, but abject and servile apologists for them ?

SENEX.

NO. VI.

THE Berlin decree, which interdicted the legitimate commerce of neutrals, with the dominions of Great Britain, and also in articles produced or manufactured in those dominions, does, in its terms, positively comprehend the United States. If, in its expression, instead of the general description which is used, there had been an enumeration of the nations to which it was to apply, and the United States had been inserted in that enumeration, it would not have been more explicit or intelligible.

No power can safely affix to the language in which the decrees of a foreign sovereign are expressed, especially if that sovereign be an ambitious conqueror, whose lust for dominion no acquisitions can satiate, a meaning in direct opposition to that which the words import, unless authorised to do so by the most unequivocal declarations. Indeed, even then, it would be more desirable that the exception should be made a public act. The United States, therefore, could not be justified in supposing themselves exempt from the operation of a decree, the words of which expressly included them, unless officially assured of such exemption. Until such assurance was given, prudence and duty required that our rulers should act with cautious circumspection, and on the principle that this decree would be construed according to its letter and its spirit.

Such assurances were never obtained. An individual officer of the French government, who professed himself to be uninformed on the subject, and who declared himself not to be the channel through which communications of that description were to be made, conjectured that this regulation would not be applied to the United States; and, on this vague conjecture, our rulers have confidently reposed. Not only have they omitted to take those measures of precaution, which the extremity of the outrage, and the imminence of the danger required, but the messages of the supreme executive to the grand council of the nation, and the debates in that council, have given a publicity and

an official form to this blind and infatuated credulity, at which the cheek of every real American must burn with indignant shame.

The justness of this censure is tacitly acknowledged, by the acquiescence of our rulers in the conduct of Bonaparte. No member of the administration, nor any one of its numerous champions, has ever once, in public conversation or in the papers, reproached his imperial majesty or the French government, with that duplicity or prevarication in this respect, with which he or they would be justly chargeable, had the exposition, given in the first instance to the decree of Berlin, been of a character to entitle itself to our confidence.

This was the critical point of time, when a firm and upright administration, impartial between the belligerent powers, and only anxious to preserve the honour and the independence of the United States, would have adopted, and ought to have adopted, a system which would have rescued the nation from the disgrace and the calamities which have ensued, and from some of the dangers with which it is now threatened.

No man is less disposed than myself, wantonly to provoke France—but no man is more perfectly convinced, that, with France especially, submission to injury invites additional injury. We must discredit all our own experience, as well as that of other nations, if we doubt this truth. The government of the United States ought, on that occasion, to have assumed a firm and decided, as well as a moderate tone. Representations of our friendly disposition towards France, ought to have been accompanied with the most unequivocal declaration of an unalterable determination, not to submit to the outrageous violation of our acknowledged rights, which the execution of the Berlin decree would consummate. We ought to have required from authority an explicit assurance, that this decree was inapplicable to the vessels of the United States; and, on the failure to obtain such assurance, we ought to have suffered our merchant vessels to arm in their own defence.

This is not all. We ought to have stated to the belligerent, whom this decree was intended to make us

the instruments of annoying, that the United States would not submit to its operation, and should it become necessary, would take measures effectually to resist it.

This is the course, which an impartial administration, jealous of the honour and independence of the nation, would have pursued; and this course would have liberated our country from the most afflicting, perhaps from all, the distress that has been since experienced.

What could have substituted for this manly system, the pusillanimous submissive line of conduct, that we have adopted towards France, and those irritating hostile measures towards Britain, which have impelled the nation to the point of a war, with the only power in the universe which can shield any part of our globe from a despotism, the most ferocious under which oppressed humanity has ever groaned? What but that temper which is ascribed to our administration?

Among the various modes by which we have manifested our unfriendly disposition to England, few are calculated to affect her more sensibly, than the encouragement given to the desertion of her seamen. It was impossible not to contrast our constant refusal to grant any of those means, by which deserters from her ships of war might be recovered, with the facility which, under similar circumstances, was constantly experienced by the vessels of France.

But whatever apology may be made for refusing our aid to a British officer, wishing to apprehend deserters, none can be given for enlisting those deserters into the American service. It was an open departure from the practice of nations, and a gross outrage on the received opinions of mankind. This inexcusable infraction of common usage and of neutral duty, led to an aggression of so serious a nature, as to fill every American bosom with just indignation.

The American frigate the *Chesapeake*, having on board three or four British deserters, was followed out of our waters by an English ship of war, who demanded the restoration of certain British seamen who had deserted from their service, were alledged to have en-

listed in ours, and to be on board the *Chesapeake*. On the refusal of captain Barron to comply with this demand, his ship was attacked, and after being forced to strike her colours, the deserters found on board were taken out of her.

This outrage on a national ship, was universally and highly resented. With one voice, the people of America exclaimed, that the wound inflicted on the honour of the United States, must be healed, and the act be disavowed, or that the appeal must be made to the last resort of nations.

The course of our administration on this occasion, merits serious attention.

A proclamation was issued, inhibiting the use of our ports, not merely to the offending vessels or officers, but to all ships of war belonging to the nation.

Although this act of reprisals was made at a time, when we were not informed that the British admiral acted under the orders of his government, and had no reason to believe that the right to search a national ship, under any pretext whatever, would be asserted, yet its apology will be found in the violence of the aggression, and in the extreme irritation of the moment. Its continuance, however, after the motives, which excused it in the first instance, were removed, stands on totally different ground.

In commenting on the non-intercourse law, I have observed, and I beg leave to repeat the observation, that it is unusual among sovereigns, to take into their own hands, by an act of reprisals, the reparation for an injury sustained, until justice has been demanded from, and refused by the offending nation. This rule is particularly applicable to the cases, in which it is not certain that the offence is to be considered as a national act. It deserves peculiar consideration too, when the reparation selected, is by a neutral against a belligerent power, and is of such a character, as essentially to injure the belligerent and serve his enemy in the war. It will be cause for still greater circumspection, if the neutral had before been suspected, not on right grounds, of favour to one of the contending par-

ties. If, in such a case, the neutral would avoid the imputation of partiality for the kind of reparation he has chosen to seize, he must entitle himself to exemption from the charge, by discontinuing his reprisals as soon as there is a reasonable ground for the opinion, that the offence is not the act of the nation, and that reparation for the injury will be voluntarily accorded.

A continuance of reprisals after such a state of things, affords too much ground for the suspicion, that the neutral has caught at the occasion to indulge partialities incompatible with neutrality.

Let us inquire how these principles apply to the case under consideration—

On the first notice of the aggression, the British minister officially declared to our representative in London, his regret at the event, and gave assurances that the act of the admiral was not authorized by his government. The right which had been asserted in committing this outrage, was explicitly disclaimed, and a readiness to make reparation for the injury was voluntarily avowed. All this preceded any communication on the subject from the American government.

When that communication arrived, it appeared that our administration had placed an insuperable bar in the way of reparation, by refusing to receive it, unless accompanied with a surrender of those belligerent rights, of the abuse of which we had complained, and the use of which were deemed by England essential to her safety.

Under these circumstances, a proclamation was issued by the British crown, forbidding a repetition of the outrage which had been committed, and prescribing for their officers, in future similar situations, a line of conduct, which would be perfectly unexceptionable. In parliament, also, the act of admiral Berkley was disclaimed; and the administration finding that our minister in London was not authorized to separate the affair of the Chesapeake, from the multiplied and complex subjects of discussion between the two countries, deputed an envoy extraordinary to the United States, for the express and single purpose of compensating for this particular injury.

Never has a proud and high-minded nation manifested more solicitude to repair an involuntary wrong ; and never, under similar circumstances, has a reasonable reparation been refused by a nation, whose dispositions were favourable to conciliation.

In the very threshold of the negociation, the British envoy encountered an obstacle, which arrested his further progress. To leave it possible for Great Britain, without self-abasement, to make further compensation for the injury which had been sustained, he deemed it indispensably necessary, that the United States should forbear further to compensate themselves. For an unauthorised injury, a signal and unequivocal apology had already been made ; and he conceived that reparation, in addition to the apology, was, in its nature, the act of a friend, which, without degradation, could only be offered to a friend. The continuance of the punishment, which had been inflicted in the first moments of resentment, was thought totally incompatible with this idea. Under these impressions, Mr. Rose required, as a preliminary to the compensation he was instructed to offer, the revocation of the proclamation, which refused the common rights of hospitality to the ships of his government.

This preliminary was denied ; and on this punctilio was the negociation broken off. For an offence committed on the high seas by a British admiral, which has been disavowed by his government, the repetition of which has been forbidden, to compensate for which, even after we had taken compensation into our own hands, a special envoy has been sent to our country, we still refuse to all the ships of war of the British nation an important privilege, which we grant to her enemy, and which is never refused to a friendly power.

I mean not to defend, on the part of Britain, the rupture of the negociation on this punctillo. The occasion was one on which, I conceive, the wise administration of a powerful empire might, without self-degradation, have receded somewhat further than is warranted by rigid practice and principles. But I think it may be safely affirmed, that the conduct of the American government is without a precedent, and could only

have been exhibited by a nation, determined not to adjust the difference to which the negotiation related. No instance can be adduced in which, for an unauthorized offence, a nation has undertaken to do itself justice by making reprisals, and has, after the wish to repair the injury was avowed, and a special envoy, deputed for that purpose, was received, refused to suspend reprisals, in order to give time for adjusting the degree of reparation which should be made. No instance of the kind will ever be furnished by a nation, not predetermined against an accommodation. Had this point been yielded by England, the negotiation would have broken off on some other.

In that able and eloquent defence of the course pursued by his government, which the secretary of state has made in his letter to Mr. Rose, he has cited three examples from British history, as being analogous to this. It required not the penetration of Mr. Madison, to perceive the dissimilitude of those cases, from that to which they were applied. In them Great Britain did not pretend, by her own act, to punish the aggression of which she complained. She demanded redress from the offending government, and received it. In this, we have ourselves punished the aggression; after which, although it was not made under the authority of government, reparation is offered, provided we will discontinue the punishment inflicted by ourselves, and thus place ourselves, as nearly as is now in our power, in the situation in which Britain stood, when she demanded and received reparation from Spain. This we have refused to do. In no point does a resemblance exist between the cases quoted, and that to which they are applied.

It is not easy to avoid drawing the contrast, between the conduct of our administration on this occasion, and on one of at least as serious a nature, where the aggression proceeded from a different quarter.

To the preservation of the American Union, no one object is perhaps more essential, than the free

navigation of the Mississippi, and the right of deposit at New-Orleans. This right, secured by a solemn treaty, was violated without a plausible pretext to justify the wrong. The whole commerce of the western states, down the only channel which conducts it to the ocean, was arbitrarily arrested, not by a military officer alledging a sudden injury, which he misconceived himself authorised to redress, but by a solemn and deliberate act of the civil government. What, on that occasion, was the conduct of our rulers? Did they take into their own hands the punishment of the aggression? Did they refuse to receive reparation for it until their other claims were conceded? Did they expect an envoy extraordinary to make this reparation; and after the aggression was disavowed, would they have refused, while adjusting the quantum of reparation, to discontinue the punishment they had inflicted? No—this was not their conduct. The aggression proceeded from Spain, then the humble vassal of France, and a very different course was pursued. Our rulers then declared, that reprisals generally led to war, and were never made by a pacific nation, until justice had been demanded and refused. Instead of waiting for a special envoy from Madrid, they dispatched one to Paris; and, instead of receiving an apology and reparation for the aggression, they bought off the injury by paying fifteen millions to Bonaparte, who then wanted money to prosecute the war, just commenced against Great Britain. By this contract, we are promised, indeed, in addition to the island of New-Orleans, the value of which I acknowledge, but to the best use of which we were before entitled, an ideal country west of the Mississippi, the boundaries of which are not ascertained, and our claim to which is a real misfortune.

Who can refuse to mark the opposition in the conduct of the same men, in these two cases, or to ascribe that opposition to the strong prejudices which govern the United States. With what anguish must the genuine American perceive, that

these prejudices entirely favour a military despot, who is chasing human liberty from the face of the earth; and oppose a nation, on whose ability to maintain her present arduous struggle, that best gift of Heaven depends for its existence !

SENEX.

NO. VII.

ON THE EMBARGO.

I WILL now solicit the attention of my fellow citizens to the embargo. On the policy of this self-destroying measure, on the mischief which it scatters through all classes of society, on the ruin it conveys to the inmost recesses of our country, it is not my purpose to remark. My observations will be confined to the evidence it affords, of that subserviency to France, and hostility to England, which characterises the present administration.

It is impossible to advert to this subject, without searching for the motives in which the law originated. In pursuing this inquiry, those aids, which, calculating on the form of our government, we might reasonably expect to derive from official sources, are unattainable. A studied obscurity covers from our view the most essential information respecting it.

As this subject was debated with closed doors, the public is not in possession of those arguments with which the bill was supported by its advocates. The message of the president, and the documents transmitted with it, furnish the only motives which our rulers have avowed for this destructive measure.

The message refers to the communications accompanying it, as "showing the great and increasing dangers with which our vessels, our seamen, and merchantize, are threatened on the high seas, and elsewhere, from the belligerent powers of Europe;" and concludes with recommending an embargo, and preparations for any event which might grow out of the crisis.

The documents, so far as we are acquainted with them, show, that the decree made at Berlin, had always been understood and intended by the emperor of France, to be applicable to the United States, and that the British government had issued a proclamation requiring their seamen in foreign parts to return to the service of their country.

It would seem then, that the only danger which these communications announced to our commerce, was found in the Berlin decree ; and the only increased danger, which threatened our seamen, was the proclamation recalling British subjects to the protection of their native land.

Let us examine these causes of alarm, and inquire what would probably have been their influence on our administration, had there not been others, which, though unacknowledged, were more operative.

Was the Berlin decree the real, efficient, moving cause of the embargo ?

There is not, perhaps, a thinking individual in the United States, who would not answer this question in the negative.

The president had acquiesced in that decree, without a serious and adequate remonstrance, too long to warrant a suspicion, that he contemplated resistance to it. When Spain, whose monarch was a known automaton, moving at the will of Bonaparte, adopted this measure in terms, and applied it to the United States, it was scarcely possible to doubt the intentions of its master. Yet no resentments were manifested by our rulers, nor was any disposition shown to counteract this nefarious war on our unoffending commerce, though it might have been done, by means far less ruinous to ourselves, than those which were selected.

If the system recommended by the executive, had really been directed against this decree, there could have been no conceivable motive, for not speaking to congress a plain and decided language, unless it was an unwillingness to proclaim to the legislature and people of America, the grating truth, that the distress they were about to experience, was to be ascribed exclusively to France.

On the contrary, he would, in all probability, have stated the fact in explicit terms. It would have been his duty to have done so, that congress might have exercised some judgment in determining, whether this arbitrary decree could have been resisted more advantageously for the United States by an embargo, or by different means.

Unfortunately, no American, who, has been within the walls of the house of representatives, can ascribe to the majority of congress, a very high degree of discernment; but it is impossible to impute to them such excess of folly, as to suppose they would have selected an unlimited embargo, as the best means of defending our commerce against this atrocious attack upon it. Of all that could be chosen, it is the most destructive to ourselves, and the least efficacious. A simple notification to our merchants, of the determination announced by the French emperor, unaccompanied by any protecting measure whatever, would have been infinitely more eligible. Allowing to the cruisers of France the utmost success that our fears could anticipate, and the injuries our merchants could have sustained from them, would have borne no proportion to those inflicted by the embargo. If the fear of giving offence, restrained the president from recommending, and congress from adopting, that obvious and honourable system of resistance, which proved successful in 1798, yet the armed ships of France, which escape the active vigilance of the British cruisers, could not annoy our neglected commerce to an extent, which would bear any comparison with its present suffering, nor even to an extent which might not have been covered by insurance.

But we deceive ourselves, if we believe, that the embargo, if really intended as a measure of resistance to the Berlin decree, would be less offensive to the haughty master of the European continent, than those which were taken in 1798. Opposition to his will, in a greater or less degree, displayed in one mode or in another, is an unpardonable crime, for which punishment inevitably follows, when the fit occasion for inflicting it shall arrive. We ought to know him better, than to believe, that he will excuse an embargo, if intended to thwart his designs, sooner than more vigorous and more efficacious measures.

But the most conclusive evidence on this subject, is afforded by the language and conduct of the administration, and of its confidential adherents. They say

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that the Berlin decree was a dead letter, innocent in point of fact, though tremendous in form. It was a mere verbal injury, which might indeed insult our sovereignty, but could not substantially impair our interests.

Human folly is not so extravagant, as to guard against such an attack with such an armour.

Complete refutation of the opinion here controverted, is also to be derived, from the direction which is given to the public sentiment. The people are exhorted to submit with patience to the calamities they feel, because this self-annoying system must soon bring Britain to our feet ; they are taught to believe, that its continuance or suspension, depends on the course of the British cabinet ; and that, should we engage in a war, it is against Britain we are to wage it. In making military appointments, every principle of propriety and decency is disregarded, in order to bestow commissions on men, recommended only by their uniform submission to the will of France, and their uniform exertions to advance the power of Bonaparte.

These circumstances are incompatible with the idea, that it was against the GREAT NATION, this ruinous measure was intended to operate.

It is not then in the Berlin decree, that we are to find the motives for this fatal act.

The British proclamation was a common and legitimate act of sovereignty, at which no nation has a right to be dissatisfied. The recall of their subjects to the defence of their country, affects not us, and can furnish no cause for any extraordinary measure on our part. If it denotes a determination to impress their seamen found in our merchant vessels on the high seas, that is no more than the continuance of a practice, which has existed throughout the last and the present war, under which our commerce has flourished in an unexampled degree, and our prosperity has been carried to a height, which, until this fatal blow, given to it by ourselves, all other nations might view with envy. It could not, therefore, furnish a motive for annihilating that commerce, and destroying that prosperity.

The communications made with the message, then, do not furnish the real motives for the embargo. It cannot be believed, that the American legislature has passed an act, suspending indefinitely the whole foreign commerce, and nearly all the revenue of the United States, paralysing the whole industry of the nation, reducing thousands to sudden beggary, and banishing a most useful class of men from their country, upon reasons so totally incapable of proving its necessity or utility, to the satisfaction of any reflecting statesman.

If we may credit communications made to the public, by members of congress, the total insufficiency of the reasons assigned in the message, to support the measure recommended, was so obvious, and was urged with such force by its opponents, that its friends were compelled to take refuge under the confidence reposed in the president, and the certainty that he would not have recommended the measure, had he not possessed intelligence which proved its propriety.

How must we be surprised, if in these times any thing could surprise us, to learn that a measure, so deeply interesting to every citizen, was passed by the legislature of the Union, because such was the will of the executive. It had been supposed, and the theory of our constitution, as well as the practice of former times, justified the supposition, that on an occasion which so vitally affected the whole community, the information and reasons, which had satisfied the judgment of the president, would be truly conveyed to the legislature, that the judgment of that body might be satisfied also. But we are authorised to believe, that the conclusive demonstration of the insufficiency of those reasons, had no tendency to arrest the pernicious measure, which was recommended. It was the WILL of the president, and he must have sufficient reasons to justify it, although he had not thought proper to trust them to the legislature.

What, then, were these secret reasons, which were so powerful, as to produce an unlimited embargo?

Are they to be looked for in the orders of the British council?

This also is impossible. At the passage of the act, those orders were unknown in America. That which is unknown, and that which does not exist, are equally incapable of constituting the real motives of human action.

Those, who are desirous of justifying this ruinous measure, and of ascribing it to the conduct of Britain, have the boldness to say, that private intelligence was received in the United States, on which the president and congress acted. This private intelligence, is stated to have been a letter, published in one of our papers, informing a correspondent that some measure, retaliating on France the Berlin decree, was about to be adopted by England. But is any human being, endowed with ordinary perception, so credulous as to believe, that the government of the United States would adopt a measure, so destructive of the national interests, on the faith of a letter written, they knew not by or to whom, inserted in a news-paper, without any verification of its authenticity, and stating that some regulation, the writer knew not what, was about to be made by the British council? Nations do not adopt a system so pernicious to themselves, on such vague and uncertain data.

Had the British orders of council furnished the inducement for the embargo, the president would have transmitted, with his recommendation of that measure, his reason for making it. No man can believe that orders, which, the instant they were known, were seized with avidity, and urged in defence of this measure, would not have been assigned at the time as its motive, had their existence then been known, and had those who, since their discovery, have so eagerly caught at them, then in reality acted on them.

It is not then in the orders of council, that we are to find the motive for imposing upon ourselves this distressing burden.

If neither the communications referred to in the message, nor the orders of council, produced the embargo, what, let me ask again, did produce it?—This severe punishment cannot have been inflicted on our devoted country, without a grave and serious motive. What

was that motive ? This is an enquiry which every citizen of the United States ought to join me in making.

After the victory of Friedland, and the treaty of Tilsit had extended the influence of Bonaparte over the north of Europe and of Asia, he seems to have thought it unnecessary, longer to exhibit the slightest semblance of respect for the sovereign rights of those nations, which had been theretofore, in some small degree, permitted to enjoy independence.— He seems to have required, that all other states, relinquishing the right of self-government, should perform the part he might assign them, in his favourite system, of combining the whole world against England, and conquering her navy, by destroying her commerce. In execution of this scheme, it is known, that he had required Denmark and Portugal to depart from that half-neutrality, which one had purchased, and in which the other had been indulged : to force Sweden into the same coalition, the arms of Russia and of Denmark, had been turned against that gallant nation.

There is every reason to believe, that this comprehensive plan embraced the United States, and that it was notified to our government, previous to the recommendation of the embargo.

It is known, that the arrival of the *Revenge*, immediately preceded that measure ; and it is understood, that she brought from our ministers in England, only duplicates of dispatches, that had before reached the executive. From France, however, very important and interesting communications are understood to have been received : We know with what earnestness, motions, requesting that these communications might be laid before congress, were repeatedly urged, and with what perseverance they were rejected. It is extremely difficult to account for this concealment, unless these communications contained the secret reasons of that embargo, which was recommended immediately after their reception. We know that the private letters, received from

France by the same arrival, concurred in the information, that Bonaparte, WHOSE VOICE IS FATE, had positively declared, there should be no neutrals.—The Paris Moniteur, of the 20th of October, the most official paper of the French government, which insinuates no political idea not sanctioned by the emperor, commences a paragraph, which seems to designate the course prescribed for us, with these sentences :—“ On the 26th of October, the congress of the United States opens its sessions at Washington. No person doubts, that the first operation of this assembly, will be a formal declaration of war against England. The public mind is so warmed on this subject, that any member of congress, who should dare to vote for pacific measures, would run a great risk of being very roughly handled by the people.”

We know too, from official documents, that France has since manifested some resentment, at our not having actually declared war ; and that she has taken some measures to make us feel that resentment ; and by acting on our fears, to force us into the declaration.

It is difficult to compare these circumstances with each other, and with the total impossibility, that the motives publicly assigned for passing the embargo, can really have produced that measure, without feeling a persuasion, that we have drawn this ruin on ourselves, in order to deprecate the wrath of the tyrant of the world, by uniting with him, in his favourite plan, to destroy the commerce of that nation, which presents the only barrier opposing that universal dominion, to which he aspires.

This is the “invisible hand,” to which one of the most intelligent and independent members of the house of representatives alluded ; and the consciousness that the allusion was just, accounts for the vindictive rage which it inspired.

The apprehension, that even this measure may not be deemed sufficient by him, whose “INVISIBLE HAND” moves nearly all the cabinets of the civil-
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zed world ; and that nothing short of war will satisfy him, can alone account for the unremitting exertions of those who rule the United States, to prepare the public mind for that full consummation of national degradation.

SLAVEY.

NO. VIII.

HAD the motive, for imposing on this country a perpetual embargo, really been the preservation of our ships, our merchandize, and our seamen, all of which are in truth destroyed by it, this baneful measure would have been limited in its operation to those objects.— There could have been no inducement to render the evil more extensive, by unnecessarily adding to the oppression of the mass of the people.

Had it been true, that the orders of council and the Berlin decree really produced this mischief-bearing act, the legislature would have been content with guarding against those orders and that decree. They would not wantonly have annihilated that great stimulus to industry, the market afforded by foreign countries for its produce.

By applying the embargo to American vessels, and to cargoes belonging to American citizens, these objects would be protected, so far as they are now protected. Under the operation of such a law, as well as under the operation of the actual law, American external commerce, carried on in their own bottoms, would have been cut up by the roots. American vessels would have exchanged the chance of being captured at sea, for the certainty of rotting in our own waters; and American produce, either in the hands of the merchants or of the people, must have found its market at home. The difference consists in this: The home market would be a better market—more buyers would appear in it. We should still supply the foreign demand. We should be driven into that policy, which our present rulers have always so much favoured—we should have been compelled to withdraw from the ocean, and to confine ourselves to ploughing the land. Yet the produce of our labour would have found its way to foreign markets, in foreign bottoms; and, although its price would have been diminished, it would not have sunk to its present distressing state of depression.

I do not pretend to say, that the embargo, thus modified, would be a proper measure. Far from it. In

any form, unless as a mere temporary expedient, to give time for reflection, and to impress on our merchants, the seriousness of the danger, I think it most ill-judged and most ruinous. But I think also, that thus modified, it would be less ill-judged, and less ruinous, than in its present all-desolating form. Most seriously do I deprecate the idea of relying on foreign bottoms, for the transportation of our surplus produce; but still more seriously do I deprecate the idea of cutting off its transportation entirely, and leaving it to perish on our hands, or to be sacrificed to those, who must be compensated by immense profits, for the risk attending an illicit trade. Deeply should I regret the ruin into which American ship-owners would be plunged by this regulation; but it is no alleviation of that ruin, to find the great body of the American people participating in it. No wise statesman will ever recommend a measure, which shall wound the interests of our merchants; but if compelled to choose between a measure which is indeed injurious to the commercial interest, and one which is not only in a still higher degree injurious to that interest, but which involves the agriculturist also in the same ruin, he cannot hesitate to embrace the latter branch of the alternative.

Whatever difficulties this alternative might present, to a man who cherished ancient opinions on the subject, it could be expected to present none to those who avow the fantastic notions, which have long been fashionable with the ruling party. Men who think commerce not a real good, but an evil, which the difficulty of breaking ancient habits and prejudices compels them to tolerate; who think, that by the cultivation of the soil alone, unaided by navigation, the true interests of the country would be best consulted, could not be expected to hesitate between a measure, taken in a form to prostrate both commerce and agriculture, and taken under such a modification, as to preserve agriculture from the ruin, to which commerce is doomed. When we find ourselves disappointed in this expectation, we look to some extrinsic cause, for the solution of the difficulty.

Two reasons are publicly assigned. The first is, that a total embargo will force the belligerent powers to change the system they have adopted—the second, that an embargo on American vessels alone, would have given our whole commerce to England.

Let these reasons be examined.

It has been already shown, that this measure could not have been taken with a view to force a repeal of the orders of council; for their existence was at the time unknown. It also deserves consideration, that these orders, not having been taken as a measure of coercion against neutrals, but as a belligerent retaliating measure upon France, it is improbable, that their repeal can precede the repeal of that decree, on which they are professedly founded. This yielding on the part of England would be an acknowledgment of her inability to contend with France, in this species of warfare, and would leave the latter power at full liberty to exercise her usurped controul over neutral commerce, in such manner, as might most sensibly wound Great Britain, unrestrained by the apprehension, that the same weapon might be turned against herself. But however this argument might be disregarded by our rulers, who, from the year 1796, have been anxious to try their strength in commercial warfare with England, the first is conclusive on the point. The embargo could not have been extended, to the total deprivation of all commerce, in order to obtain a repeal of orders, not known at the time to be in existence. It might be so extended, for the purpose of forcing a surrender of other principles, but not of this.

Neither can its extension be ascribed to a hope, that it would compel Bonaparte to rescind the Berlin decree. Our rulers will never attempt to act openly and directly on his fears. Such a system would contradict all their opinions respecting him. But if they had proposed so to act, the modification suggested would have been more operative, than the measure in its present form. He would have perceived in it the counteraction, instead of the support, of his favourite system of warfare on British commerce.

Discarding the first reason, then, as having been obviously inoperative, let us proceed to the second. It is, that congress was restrained from modifying the embargo, in such a manner as to effect its avowed object, without ruining the cultivators of the soil, by the fear that such a modification, while it diminished the pressure on ourselves, would also benefit England, and consequently be offensive to France.

Ought our conduct to be so influenced, by such a motive ?

It will be readily conceded, that the modification proposed would have the effect suggested, and that a neutral nation, in the general, cannot safely frame such commercial regulations, as will benefit one of two belligerents, and injure the other. If the regulation be made without a sufficient motive of its own, and with a view to its effect on the belligerents, it becomes an obvious departure from neutrality, and a measure of hostility. But if the regulation is dictated by plain and important national interests ; if it is framed with an obvious view to the state of the country, and affects belligerents incidentally and consequently, it ceases to be a departure from neutrality, and to furnish just cause of offence.

Of this latter description, would be the modification in question. If the injustice of belligerent powers, especially of France, with whom the system originates, compels us to relinquish the transportation in our own bottoms, of the produce of our industry, we are obviously driven to the necessity of selling that produce to those who will come to our own market to purchase it. That the home market is left open to every competitor, is a measure apparently dictated by our substantial interests. It is not adopted with a view to its effect upon belligerents, but to its effect upon ourselves. If one belligerent is in a situation to come to that market, with more facility than the other, this casual advantage arises from causes not produced by us, and gives no right to the party, who finds himself unable to reach our market, to say, that it shall, on that account, be closed against all the world. No nation has a right to say, that because she cannot purchase from us, we

shall sell to nobody ; or that to promote her comparative interests with a rival, she wishes to destroy, we must sacrifice our own. This is a demand which no nation ought to make, and to which no nation ought to submit. It involves the claim of sovereignty, on the part of the nation making the demand, and betrays the dependence of the nation submitting to it.

This reason then, which is openly and publicly assigned by the friends of the administration, for that augmentation of distress, which is produced by the extension of the embargo to foreign vessels, is the most conclusive evidence which can be presented to the mind, of our inveterate hate to England, and of our fatal submission to France. Rather than not indulge that hate, we inflict the most serious injuries on ourselves ; and rather than risk giving offence to France, by a measure not offensive in its nature, with which she has not a right to be offended, we submit to the most distressing privations, that rank hostility to our prosperity could have dictated.

This pernicious extension too, furnishes additional proof, that the real motives of the embargo have not been publicly assigned.

SENEX.

NO. IX.

THE British orders of council are not, in principle, so destructive of our commerce as the Berlin decree. The latter, by declaring all the dominions of Great Britain in a state of blockade, subjects to seizure and condemnation, every vessel found trading with those dominions. It consequently prohibits our commerce with the British West Indies, as well as with her territories in Europe. This is a circumstance of the more consequence, because the facilities for privateers, which were furnished by the islands then under the controul of France, enabled them to annoy, to a great extent, all vessels sailing in those seas.

The former leaves unmolested the whole trade between the colonies and the United States. This is a difference of immense consequence. It also exempts from the penalties of the blockade, which is extended to all the European dominions of France, and of her allies in the war, those neutral vessels which will touch at any port in England, and pay a small sum of money as the price of the exemption.

This relaxation of the rigor of the blockade, has given great offence in the United States. The irritation it has excited, would certainly have been sufficiently provoked, had this universal blockade of the European dominions of the enemies of Great Britain, been declared by her before those enemies had placed her dominions in the same state. Had she commenced this system, we ought to have felt against her the same indignation, which the Berlin decree ought to have excited against France; and we ought to have resisted these orders with the same energy, that ought to have been exerted in resisting the Berlin decree. But she did not commence it. And if the blockade can be justified, as a measure of retaliation, no relaxation of that blockade can add to its offensiveness.

England then has, in leaving open our trade to the colonies of her enemy, stopped far short of France in the hostile career into which both have entered.

There is a material difference between the extent of these measures, in another respect. The Berlin de-

gree not only cuts off all intercourse between the United States and the dominions of Great Britain, but forbids all traffic in articles of the growth or manufacture of those dominions.

This extravagant prohibition is not retaliated.

It is then apparent, that the orders of council are, in their letter and spirit, much less comprehensive than the decree, to retaliate which those orders were made.

A general blockade, proclaimed by either of those powers, suggests one observation, which can escape no person. That a belligerent has a right to blockade any port of his enemy, is admitted. It is only required, that he should, in fact, invest that port, so as to make the attempt to enter it dangerous. So immense is the naval power of England, that she can, in point of fact, invest at the same time a very great number of the ports of her enemy, while France is absolutely unable to station a blockading force at any port in the world. She dares not openly trust a fleet into any sea ; and if her ships casually steal into the ocean, their safety depends on returning undiscovered. A blockading decree, therefore, by France, is an outrage upon neutrals, for which no semblance of apology can be framed. It is an undisguised and shameless licence to her privateers and cruisers, to commit piracy on all neutral vessels.

Although his imperial majesty commenced this depredating system, he sought not to restrain his rage, at finding that his enemy followed his example, even at a distance. Although that enemy remained far behind him, he could not tolerate the attempt to retaliate on himself any portion of his own injustice. His resentments broke out in the Milan and Bayonne decrees, by which his outrages on the United States have been carried to extremities, which amount in fact to war. He subjects to capture and condemnation every American vessel which has ever been visited by an English ship ; he seizes all American vessels in his ports, or which his corsairs can bring in ; and he sequesters all American property found on the water or on land, with the avowed purpose of confiscating it, if the United States do not declare war against England.

Language cannot heighten these enormities. The simple narrative can receive no increased colouring from those epithets, which indignation would interweave with it. He must be dead to every American sentiment, who does not feel for his insulted and disgraced country. If, under those threats, the United States go to war with England, our independence is already but an empty name, and not even that will be long retained.

It has been shown, not only that France commenced this system of warfare on neutral rights, but that she has greatly outstripped her enemy in the flagitious course. The time will not be entirely misapplied, which is devoted to a comparison of the temper towards the United States, which these two nations have displayed, in this contest of violence.

Although the Berlin decree was an open and flagrant violation of the rights which were guaranteed to this country by a solemn treaty, as well as by the law of nations, yet no previous notification was given to the United States of the intended infraction of those rights; nor has any subsequent apology, so far as is publicly known, been made. Not only has the emperor of France treated us with this insulting neglect, but in the style of a haughty master, offended that his mandates are not executed the instant they are issued, he adds to the chastisement by fresh injuries, and punishes our disobedience in delaying a declaration of war against Great Britain, by seizing all our property within his grasp; the confiscation of which, he plainly tells us, depends on our entering into the war he dictates.

What has been the style in which this contest has been conducted by England?

When the Berlin decree was issued, she expressed, in decent terms, her confidence that the United States would not submit to this gross infraction of their rights; and at the same time, gave the notice which the occasion required—that, as Britain was affected essentially by this violence practised on neutral commerce, she would be compelled, in her own defence, to adopt measures of retaliation against her enemy, with respect to those nations who should unresistingly permit

this decree to go into operation. When afterwards those measures were adopted, they were communicated to the United States in terms of expressive regret, for the necessity which caused them, and of the readiness with which they would be discontinued, when that necessity should cease.

Britain then, would not have applied her orders to the United States, had they taken measures to prevent her enemy from the unlawful use of their commerce, as an instrument of war against her. She would not now so apply them, if they would take such measures.—And she will revoke them, the instant France shall discontinue the system commenced by that power.

But will France recall the Berlin decree, should Britain annul the orders of council? She has never said so—and we know she will not. The Berlin decree having preceded the orders of council, was not produced by them, and does not depend on them—Britain then wishes, but France refuses, to discontinue this system of aggression.

After this brief and hasty sketch of the conduct of the two belligerent powers towards the United States, let us for a moment turn our eyes on ourselves, and examine the impression they have respectively made on us.

Towards Britain a high degree of resentment has been manifested; a determination to resist her encroachments has been avowed; and war, should she persist in her course, is the language of all the ministerial circles.

Do we exhibit towards France a similar temper?—Has the usurpation of Bonaparte of sovereign power over the United States, in directing the course of our whole external commerce, in deciding for us the all-important question of peace and war, in seizing all our property within his grasp, and declaring that its confiscation depends on our entering into the war he orders, produced one indignant, one manly sentiment in the bosoms of our rulers?

With inexpressible mortification, must every genuine American answer—none. Instead of those feelings, and that energetic system, which the occasion so loudly demands, which a really independent nation could

not fail to exhibit, we are endeavouring to turn aside the wrath of the conqueror by obedience—We are endeavouring to prepare the public mind for the war he directs.

The genius of America seems to turn pale, and humble itself before that of France. We receive, with humility, and without a murmur, the stripes which his imperial majesty pleases to inflict. We dare not even writhe under the lash. With smiles we kiss the hand that scourges us, and lick the foot that treads upon us.

At length, in an important part of the Union, the spirit of independence seems to revive. A light dawns in the East, and gladdens the American bosom with the hope, that the inestimable rights of self-government will not be surrendered without a struggle. The people of New-England are awake—and have in some slight degree, shewn at their elections a disposition, like the people of Spain, to assert rights, which their government seems unwilling to maintain.

Should this spirit extend itself, it may avert the dangers which threaten us.—France has a minister at Washington, and this portentous change may be communicated to his imperial majesty, who will be careful, while Britain maintains her ascendancy on the ocean, not to drive the United States to desperation.

SENEX.

G

NO. X.

WITH a faithful pencil, guided by the hand of truth, I have endeavoured, in the preceding numbers, to sketch, in miniature, the most prominent features which designate the conduct of the American government towards foreign nations—A full life portrait has not been attempted. It would require too much canvass, and be a work of too much labour. My object is to induce reflection; for to me it seems impossible to reflect, without perceiving the dangerous precipice towards which we are impelled.—The partiality which has been displayed; the efforts which are incessantly made to keep up the resentment of the nation against England; the extreme solicitude which has been manifested to conceal the outrages of France; and the anxiety, with which apologies have been made for those which force themselves upon our view; demonstrate but too clearly, that, if the temper of the people will bear it, and France continues to insist on it, the resolution is taken to declare war against Great Britain.

Strong as are our partialities for France, deep-rooted as is that hate of England, which has long rankled in the bosoms of our rulers, I do not ascribe to those passions so much influence, as to believe that they could, unaided by other causes, induce our administration to incur the hazards of open war, and risk their popularity by declaring it. They would content themselves with increasing the prejudices, and fomenting the resentments of the people, so as to preserve, in their highest exasperation, the ill dispositions they at present feel towards England, and incline them to carry, still further, that system of "war in disguise," into which we have with so much alacrity, already engaged. If we are driven beyond this point, it is, I believe by external influence.

The opinion, that Britain must fall, and that it would be madness in us to draw upon ourselves the vengeance of the conqueror, by any opposition to his will, is but ill concealed. A little more of the

curtain is daily raised, and that secret, which was indeed too thinly veiled to be hidden from us, had we not closed our eyes to the light we possessed, is more exposed to our view. The ministerial papers begin to speak still more plainly, and we hear without much surprise, that Bonaparte is the minister of Heaven, sent to execute a great work ; sent to fulfil the prophecies, and establish the millenium. Resistance would of course be impious.

I shall conclude these essays, with a temperate appeal, on this subject, to the reason of my fellow citizens. I ask them to examine all the testimony they possess, to consult experience, to think with that serious intentness which the crisis so eminently demands, and, amidst real difficulties, to decide for themselves what line of conduct affords the fairest and most rational hope for safety.

That the independence of the United States cannot, without the interposition of a miracle, survive the fall of the British empire, is, I believe, the opinion of every reflecting man. Of consequence, America can have no motive for endeavouring to precipitate that fall, unless it be the hope, that her prompt and seemingly cheerful obedience may lighten her chains, perhaps may save that poor remnant of self-government, which consists in receiving the orders of the conqueror through a fellow citizen, instead of a Frenchman.—Bonaparte may give us a Schimmelpenninck, instead of a Louis.

Let us enquire, whether there is any reasonable foundation for this degrading hope.

I will not go through the long list of nations, that have been subjugated by France. I will not attempt to shew the fate of those who have resisted, nor to contrast it with what has befallen those, who, endeavouring to mitigate a fall they thought inevitable, have been swallowed in this all-devouring vortex, without a struggle for their preservation. I will select Portugal and Spain, the two last cases that have occurred, and ask that they may be considered.

Portugal is the ancient ally of England. Her situation created a natural connection with that power, on which she necessarily relied for protection from Spain.

But she is not generally engaged in the quarrels of the continent ; and, from the commencement of the present war, she has sought to preserve her neutrality. It is understood, that she had paid France high premiums for being permitted to remain in peace.

Her complaisance, however, did not avail her. After the treaty of Tilsit, she was ordered to enter into the continental confederacy ; and, without knowing that these orders would be disobeyed, French troops were marched towards that country, in order to occupy it. Under the pretext of defending them from England, their government was subverted, and their prince only saved himself by flying to the Brazils.

A French general took possession of Portugal, proclaimed the friendly views with which he came, disarmed the people, dried up the sources of their wealth by destroying their commerce, and required from them an enormous sum of money ; not much less in proportion to their population and riches, than one hundred millions would be from the people of the United States.

Portugal had given no offence. Her conduct was such, as even to warrant the opinion, that she would enter, though certainly with repugnance, into the views of France.

But Portugal, it may be said, was, in secret, friendly to England.—Let us then turn our eyes to Spain.

From a period long anterior to the elevation of Bonaparte to the supreme power, Spain has been the obedient, the obsequious vassal of France. Without pretending to a will of her own, she has made peace, and she has made war, as France has directed. She has submitted to the most serious privations, and has profusely lavished her treasure and her blood, not for Spanish, but for French purposes. No partiality for England was imputed to her, nor did the suspicion exist, that she was about to make a single effort to throw off the galling yoke she had so long worn.

What has Spain obtained by all this submission ? Is her condition better, or is her prospect less gloomy than that of other nations ?

Far from it. Her armies have marched to the extreme points of the continent, under the banners of France ; there they are subdivided into detachments, which render all exertion to return to the defence of their native land impotent ; the passes into their country are occupied by the French, as their friends ; French troops are introduced as friends into their fortified towns ; an immense army takes possession of their capital ; its general is invested, by the vassal monarch, with supreme authority, and thus the whole power of civil government is, in fact, transferred to him ; the king of Spain is then decoyed into France, and there compelled to abdicate his crown, and transfer his kingdom to the subtle tyrant, to whose seductive wiles he had fallen a victim.

Goaded into fury by this tissue of treachery and of tyranny, by which an ancient and gallant people saw their nation annihilated, and themselves transferred like cattle, to a foreign master, the Spaniards flew to arms. But the time to defend their liberties, to preserve their national existence, it is greatly to be apprehended, has been permitted to pass away for ever. Torrents of their richest blood, it is feared, will be shed in vain. The pusillanimity of the government has betrayed the people, and they awake to a sense of their danger only, when to escape that danger is no longer possible.

Yet the struggle is glorious. It elevates Spain to the highest point of grandeur, and gives a new lustre to the character of the nation. Every bosom, in which the flame of liberty is not absolutely extinguished, must take a deep interest in her fate. Every generous feeling of the human soul must arm in her favour.

Spain is a beacon, which ought to warn the United States of their danger. If submission could save even nominal self-government from the insatiate ambition of Bonaparte, that poor vestige of former greatness would have been saved to Spain. If it could preserve to any nation the wretched consolation of being governed, according to his will, under their ancient forms, Spain would have been that nation.

On what foundation then rests the hope of the United States, that submission can save us ? Is it our distance from France ? We are not much further than St. Domingo ; and what is distance to the lord of Europe, and the master of the ocean ?

Is it, as some infatuated men have said, that we offer him no inducement to enslave us ? Vain and futile illusion ! Since when has a weak, a rich and a populous country, possessing the finest rivers in the world, abounding with all materials for ship building, capable of yielding an immense revenue, and of raising considerable armies, ceased to tempt ambition, or to furnish motives to the conqueror ? This rich, and once happy country, will afford to the emperor a vast extension of his own power, and an increase of means to gratify his numerous favourites.

We cannot then indulge the hope, that our insignificance, any more than our submission, will save us.

By submission, we, in fact, add to our danger.— Let us only be true to ourselves, and, so long as the maritime superiority of Britain remains, we are safe. But let us be unfaithful to ourselves, and, yielding to the influence of our fears, engage in the wars of Bonaparte, and we become slaves, though Britain should remain free.

I ask, what ally of France has not been compelled to enter into all her views ? Even Russia, who can bring into the field near half a million of excellent troops, has entitled herself to the reproach of posterity, by turning her arms, at the direction of Bonaparte, against a neighbour and a faithful friend, saved by the Baltic from his grasp. Russia, powerful as she still is, gives up her own system, and becomes subservient to his objects. But what ally of France, who ceased to be formidable in a military point of view, has not, in form as well as fact, become her slave ? What hope, then, can we entertain of being more fortunate ?

If we declare war against England, we must carry it on as our master, under the name of our ally, shall direct ; we must receive into our country such auxiliaries as he shall offer ; we must pay, as our just portion of the burdens of the war, such sums as he shall

prescribe. And being once in his embrace, when and how shall we escape it ?

In submission, then, we meet a ruin, alike certain and disgraceful. We have no hope, but in a manly assertion of our rights, and an unyielding adherence to self-government.

If, as is most obvious, the independence of the United States, in the present condition of the world, rests on the maritime ascendancy of England ; if our dangers are, in every point of view, increased by impairing that ascendancy ; if, by going to war with that power, we incur the double hazard of losing our independence from her destruction, and from the foothold France will obtain in our country ; if our rulers openly manifested prejudices, and take measures, which lead to such a war—where shall we look for safety ?

The answer is obvious. We must look for it to ourselves ; and we must look for it in a change of measures, which can only be effected by a change of men. If we would not continue, as an instrument of hostility against the commerce of England, an embargo, which is ruinous to ourselves, until we raise it by an actual declaration of war, we must confide the government of our country to men, who are not devoted to the miserable system, under which we now suffer.

The present is to the United States, a most interesting crisis. On the elections about to be made, every thing depends. It is scarcely less essential to attend to the state legislatures, than to that of the continent. Although the persons we are about to choose, will not come immediately into power, the elections will be a sure test of public sentiment, and will greatly influence the conduct of those, who must rule us yet a short time longer. Every genuine American ought to recollect, that these elections possibly decide the liberty and the independence of his country.

SENEX.



A FARMER.

NO. I.

THE spectacle, now exhibited by the United States, has undoubted claims to a very distinguished place among those wonderful events, which are crowded into the early part of the present century. Bonaparte is not the first conqueror, to whom a servile world has bowed its neck : but a civilized and intelligent people, active, industrious, agricultural, and commercial, possessing all the means by which those qualities might be advantageously employed, suddenly withdrawing themselves from the ocean, and cutting off their intercourse with the world, presents a phenomenon in political economy, of which the history of the human race furnishes only this solitary example.

Planted by kind Providence in a bountiful soil, from which our labour extracts an immense surplus produce, we are commanded by our government to see that surplus perish on our hands ! Having acquired, from a judicious use of the advantages of our situation, the second commercial marine in the world ; a marine, which, after the transportation of our own commodities, carries extensively for others, we decree, that our ships shall rot in our harbours ! Possessing a numerous and skilful body of seamen, we present to them

the gloomy alternative of starving at home, or seeking employment abroad ! While wafted on a full tide of unexampled prosperity, we have ourselves turned out of the stream, have locked up our ports, and have declared, that the United States shall no longer appear in the society of nations ! We have imposed on ourselves a perpetual embargo, which, pressing like an *incubus*, on the bosom of the nation, arrests the course of that vital current, whose healthful motion gave activity and energy to the whole political body ! ! !

Such is the disastrous situation to which we are reduced, by an administration, to whose misrule this devoted country has, for eight years, been subjected ; by an administration composed of men who, by deceptive promises of imaginary good, had disgusted us with real happiness, and seduced us from the councils of true wisdom, to confide our destinies to them.

It would be some alleviation, were this dark prospect brightened by the hope of better times. Unfortunately, it is not. The calamities of the moment belong not to the moment only. The burden is not lightened, by the expectation that we may soon be relieved from it. We have the melancholy certainty of bearing it until we place power in other hands. Those who found us the most flourishing people on earth, who have dictated public measures, and guided at will the councils of the nation, whose system has sunk us to the wretched and hopeless condition in which we now find ourselves, are incapable of being corrected by experience. They are still as loud as ever in their plaudits of that system ; still pronounce it the greatest effort of human wisdom ; still obstinately persist, not merely in its support, but in its extension. The embargo then, or some measure not less destructive, must be of equal duration with their power.

So inveterate are the prejudices, which a long course of flagitious calumny has excited against the wise and good of America, that their warning voice, proclaiming the ruin into which our rulers were about to plunge us, has been raised in vain. So violent is our antipathy against one foreign nation, so ardent our partiality for another ; so devoted are we to those, who,

by aggravating that antipathy and soothing that partiality, flatter our most dangerous passions, that the voice of reason and of patriotism, demonstrating the weakness of that fatal system which has been adopted, and predicting the miseries which must flow from it, has either not been heard, or has been heard with contempt. Yet now, when we feel, that the most gloomy of these predictions are verifying; when the calamities which were foretold are beginning to press us; when the intention of persevering in the same destructive system is openly avowed, the hope may be cherished, that passion will yield to sober reflection, and that measures may at length be estimated by their intrinsic value, not by a blind prejudice for or against the men who propose them.

In this hope, the sufficiency of the motives which are assigned for the great national calamity, which our rulers have drawn upon us, will be briefly examined.

The decrees of France, not only infracting the most solemn obligations, which can be created by treaty, but exhibiting also, the most inaffable contempt for the sovereignty of the United States; and the subsequent orders in council, issued by Britain with the avowed purpose of retaliating on her enemy the injuries sought to be inflicted on herself, are the alleged causes of this self-destroying measure. Although the orders of council were unknown, when the embargo was enacted, and consequently could not have contributed to produce it, they are now known; and, if they would have originally justified the measure, they would now justify its continuance. I shall not, therefore, at present, avail myself of that circumstance.

Postponing any comparison of these decrees and orders with each other, or any consideration of the opposite impressions, which, under the actual circumstances of the world, the conduct of each belligerent ought to make on a nation loving liberty, and valuing its independence, it is my purpose for the present, to solicit my fellow citizens to accompany me in the enquiry, whether this ruinous measure is calculated to effect its object, or to produce a future good, proportioned to those countless ills which are its inseparable attendants.

What object, let me first ask, was the embargo intended to effect? In what manner, and on what, was it to operate?

To foreign nations, and sometimes to ourselves, it has been represented as a measure of precaution, designed only for self-protection. Of this pretext, no foreign nation has been the dupe; nor is it believed that any American is so credulous, as to give it his faith—The safety attending those voyages, which have been permitted by the government, still more than the paucity of the captures made on those vessels, which covered the ocean when the embargo was imposed, demonstrate that the danger was not so imminent as to require this desperate expedient. But were the fact otherwise, to what does the embargo afford protection? Is our surplus produce protected? Let this question be answered by the agriculturist or the fisherman, whose market is wrested from him, and who sees that surplus perishing on his hands. Does it save our shipping? Let this question be answered by the merchant, whose property is rendered useless, and is rotting at our wharves. Does it preserve our seamen? The honest tar, who, with folded arms and aching heart, contemplates the ocean, from which he is banished, or bids adieu to his family and home to search for bread in foreign service, will tell you it has ruined him. To whom then, or to what, is its protection extended? Every observing man, not infatuated by the demon of party, will answer—to no person and to nothing. Men are not served by rendering their industry unproductive, nor is property preserved to its owners by being rendered useless to them. It is by permitting labour to find employment, and by allowing the produce of labour to find a market, that real protection is afforded, and real encouragement given to the one or the other.

If, in point of fact, the conduct of the belligerents had driven America from the ocean, and compelled her to seek for safety by retiring within herself, that conduct cannot have compelled her to deny to her citizens the scanty privilege of selling the produce of their labour to those foreigners, who will take upon

themselves the risk of transporting it to its place of consumption. If the danger of searching a foreign market is too great to be encountered by ourselves ; if the merchants of the United States, incapable of " managing their own affairs in their own way, without " too much regulation," have become so incompetent to decide on this danger, that the government must decide for them, this can afford no reason for destroying our home market also. Was this the real motive for the embargo, it would be imposed on ourselves alone, and the total loss of our property would be prevented by permitting us to sell to others. If motives of policy should induce us to exclude from our ports those who infract our rights, no motives, which can be avowed, would exclude from them those who respect our neutral privileges. They would be permitted to purchase and export the surplus produce of our labour. Imbecility itself could not devise as a measure of protection, that system of destruction, which our administration has adopted.

If we demand other evidence, than is furnished by the measure itself, of the motives to which it is to be ascribed, that other evidence is to be found in the language of government, and in the long settled opinions of the administration.—Any man who reads the debates in congress, who hears the sentiments uttered by those who possess the confidence of the administration, will perceive that the embargo is a measure, not of self-preservation, but of vengeance ; that it is designed not to protect ourselves, but to coerce a foreign nation ; that it is not a regulation made for internal purposes, but is intended to operate externally, and to reduce to our feet and the feet of the merciless tyrant of the European continent, who has exacted similar measures from all his slaves, a foreign nation, whose humiliation constitutes the first ambition of that tyrant and of our rulers.

To all who have adverted to the public opinions of public men, it is well known, that the leaders of the party now in power, have long been solicitous to measure strength with Great Britain, in a commercial struggle. The unprofitable contest of trying *which can do*

the other the most harm, is one in which they have long been most anxious to engage. It is the political hobby-horse which, from the adoption of our present constitution, they have been impatient to bestride. In the first congress, this policy was advocated with that zeal, which is inspired by strong national prejudice ; and in 1794, the same spirit agitated the whole American people. The system of rejecting amicable arrangement with Great Britain, and of humbling that hated power by commercial regulations, was then urged with a fervor, which was not confined within the walls of congress.—It will be recollected by all, that when the firm virtue and sound judgment of WASHINGTON checked this ruin-bearing system, by the nomination of Mr. Jay to negotiate with England, the respect which had been felt for our patriot chief yielded to the fierce resentment of party, and this wise measure was reprobated as a sacrifice of national honour, which must infallibly lead to a sacrifice of national interest also. It was then said, as it is now said, that America possessed the means of dictating to Great Britain the terms of their future intercourse, and that the only *desideratum* to give these means full effect, was an administration which would employ them.

Equally well must be recollected, the wild fury which was excited on laying before the public the treaty, in which those negotiations terminated—a treaty, which secured the peace, and promoted the best interests of the United States. On that occasion, as on this, the whole party, with one voice, exclaimed, that the treaty ought to be rejected, and commercial restrictions substituted in its place ; that, had the government resorted to this system of coercion, instead of negotiation, the most extravagant demands which could have been made by America, would have been conceded.

Had the executive, as well as the legislature, been then, as now, in possession of this party, they would have placed their country then, in the situation in which they have now placed it. But fortunately for the United States, the steady hand of WASHINGTON guided the helm of our political barque ; and he possessed too

much penetration, to be deceived by this intemperate clamour, and too much virtue to yield to it. He disappointed the views of this powerful party ; and a comparison between our present situation and that in which his measures placed us, will enable us to appreciate the two systems.

To these evidences of former infatuation, others of a more recent date may be added. The non-importation law is a germ from the same stock. It was the commencement of that plan of giving law to England by shackles on commerce, on which the heated imaginations of our rulers have so long dwelt. We are now about to witness its completion. Those who have forgotten the language of the day, and who are willing to drink still deeper of the cup of humiliation, are invited to turn to the debates, which that subject produced. It is difficult, for a real American, to feel more disgust or mortification, than must be excited by the swaggering, bullying speeches, delivered by men, who derive importance from being clothed with the power of the American people. The language uttered by those who have been emphatically styled "the troops of the palace," on passing the act for suspending this law, is recommended to particular notice. It demonstrates, as clearly as a political truth can be demonstrated, the temper in which this pernicious system originated.

It is then most obvious, that the embargo was intended as a measure of coercion. It remains to enquire, whether, if contemplated in this point of view, it promises to be less impotent than when considered as a measure of protection.

A FARMER.

NO. II.

THE effect of the embargo as a measure of coercion, is now to be considered.

However apparent it may be, that this favourite offspring of our administration was never intended to operate against France, it might be deemed a defect in the argument, not to contemplate the subject, with a view to that power, as well as England. I will, therefore, bestow a few words on it.

The most obsequious tool of the Great Nation can no longer deny, that the object of their emperor is the conquest of the world. No man is so blind, as not to perceive, that to place his own followers and dependents on every throne; to convert also into monarchies for their use, the few republics he has not yet overturned; and to reign himself the emperor of emperors, and the king of kings, is a scheme not too extravagant for his gigantic ambition. Even before the publication of the secret treaty of Fontainebleau, in which his imperial majesty engaged to dispose of the United States, no observing man, not blinded by prejudice, could be so infatuated as to believe, that the subjugation of this country formed no part of his plan.

The only obstacle to the complete execution of this splendid *project*, is England; and England could no longer oppose it, were her marine superiority destroyed. The main pillar, on which this superiority must rest for its support, is commerce; and to annihilate commerce, is to break that shield which covers what yet remains of liberty and national sovereignty, from the insatiate devourer of both. Regardless, therefore, of individual suffering, the great enemy of human happiness overlooks the miseries inflicted on his own subjects, and sees in the total annihilation of commerce, only its ultimate effect on the British navy, and its consequent aggrandisement of himself. He cannot effect his object, without involving the trade of France in that universal destruction, which must be decreed to commerce generally, in order to reach that of his enemy, and his measures are therefore all taken with this view. It was impossible not to foresee, that his unparalleled

attempt to convert all neutrals into the mere instruments of his hostility against an adversary commanding the ocean, would urge that adversary to measures of retaliation, which would retort with interest on his own subjects and vassals, the injuries designed for the enemy. It was impossible not to foresee, that to the war he had commenced on neutral commerce, so much of that commerce as was carried on for France, must become the victim. Yet this consideration did not restrain him. Nay more, as if fearful that the edicts of Britain might not completely exclude neutrals from French ports, he has, by other regulations, aided their efforts.—Had the embargo never been imposed, the lawless seizure and confiscation of all neutral property within his reach, must effectually have banished from his ports, every American who had not received private assurances of protection, and who was not so blindly devoted to him as to confide in those assurances. The total suspension of all intercourse, between France and other nations by sea, must then have been contemplated by her master, when he commenced this outrageous system, and was considered by him as an evil, which by no means counterbalanced the advantages he expected to derive from the extinction of commerce. The evil pressed upon the people, the advantage was its tendency to gratify his gigantic ambition.

The interdiction of commerce therefore by the United States, instead of coercing France, is carrying into execution the plan of her emperor. Accordingly, we find him expressing his full approbation of this measure, to us so distressing.

Although the embargo was not designed to affect France injuriously, the hope was unquestionably cherished, that the wound it must inflict on Britain, would be mortal. Does any ground remain on which this hope can rest ?

The medium through which it was to operate vitally on Great Britain, was her commerce. By withholding provisions from her West India Islands, and raw materials from her manufactories, and by refusing to receive her manufactures, we calculated on humbling

her proud spirit, and reducing her to our feet. This privation, added to that arising from the occlusion of every port in Europe, while she was engaged in a most distressing war, it was supposed, would reduce her to the last extremity.

However we might have been beguiled in the first instance, by a false estimate of our own means, compared with those of other nations, experience has certainly detected and exposed the error. We now perceive, that substitutes for the food usually supplied by this country can be found ; that every raw material can be obtained elsewhere ; and that the markets, open for her manufactures, are too ample to warrant the expectation, that the loss of ours, were it even possible to deprive her of it, would bring her to our feet.— These propositions have been so clearly demonstrated, both in the senate and house of representatives, that no mind, which is not closed against the light of reason, can withhold from them its full assent. To the able and conclusive arguments that have been urged in both houses of congress, I solicit the calm and deliberate attention of every American, who wishes to judge correctly of the present alarming crisis, and to take an accurate view of the true interests of his country. He will find strong and solid grounds for the opinion, that the evils inflicted on Great Britain by the embargo, are compensated by the advantages she derives from that measure. Were it submitted to her to determine whether it should be continued or removed, the question, which alternative her immediate interests would incline her to embrace, presents a problem not easy of solution. Most clearly it does not possess such coercive qualities as to induce a surrender of those principles on which her maritime superiority depends, or a relinquishment of that retaliating system, which she has on great deliberation adopted. The former would destroy her national grandeur, and with it her national existence ; and the latter, by acknowledging her inability to retort upon France the injuries which that nation seeks to inflict, by violating every principle of public law, would be to meet naked and unarmed an enemy holding an unlawful weapon, which he had both the

skill and disposition to wield with infinite force. However earnestly our rulers may wish these results, they can no longer be so infatuated as to expect them.

Were this experiment on our ability to humble Great Britain as little injurious to ourselves as to her, it might be of equal duration with the enmity of our rulers. However impolitic it might be deemed by those, who entertain just conceptions of the danger to be apprehended from France, they would bear with silent resignation an evil, for which there would be no remedy. But this measure, so impotent as it respects foreign powers, operates with most destructive energy upon ourselves. From a high degree of active animation, in which every mental and corporeal power might be exerted to great national and individual advantage, it has reduced us, while yet in the vernal season of youth, to a state of death-like torpor, in which the choicest functions of our political being are suspended. The sources both of national and individual wealth, which were lately so abundant, if not absolutely dried up, have their streams forced out of those channels which might fertilize our country. Public and private revenue are equally destroyed. The same blow has annihilated both. Every member of the community who had any thing to lose, perceives and feels the calamity.

I will not dwell on that distress in which all participate, and of which all are sensible. No representation can equal the reality, nor make any impression which the pressure of the evil has not made. On that subject only one remark will be hazarded. The importation of necessaries has not yet been stopped, and to a considerable extent the embargo has been evaded. To these causes are to be ascribed that languid current, which still creeps through our political system. These causes are now to be removed, and their removal will be followed by total stagnation. Hitherto the produce of our labour, though greatly depressed, has sold for something. Let the system be perfected, and it will command no price whatever—circulation must stop.

Though I mean not to dilate on the evils we feel, I will invite the thinking part of the community to reflect

on those which, if less obvious, are not, I fear, less certain.

The most valuable staples of the United States are the growth of other countries, and can be furnished by them in great abundance. The commercial state of the world is undergoing a revolution, which, notwithstanding our utmost care and circumspection, will probably raise up powerful competitors in those branches of industry, of which we have hitherto possessed almost the monopoly. By withdrawing our commodities from the market, we surrender it to our rivals, give a forced acceleration to their progress, and put them in immediate possession of a trade they might be a long time in acquiring. It is possible, that we may recover it in part, but it is scarcely possible that it can ever be completely restored to us. The mischiefs drawn upon us by the blind prejudice of our rulers, will probably be felt for ages to come.

But our self-inflicted injuries are not exclusively of a pecuniary nature. To the view of the statesman, others present themselves, which, though less immediately felt, are not less to be deprecated. Not only will the moral principle of our merchants be tainted, by inviting them to evasions of the law, but the whole mass of the people will be infected by those demoralizing regulations, which, if not rendered inevitable, will at least find an apology in our situation. To relieve the great body of debtors from that distress which is created by taking from labour its profit, the administration of justice is, in several states, already diverted from its usual course ; and that sense of the obligation of contracts, which our constitution has contributed so much to strengthen, and on which national prosperity so much depends, if not absolutely destroyed, must be greatly impaired. Inattention to engagements will become habitual ; debt will be augmented by the accumulation of interest ; while the means of discharging it will be dissipated : the hope of being absolved from it otherwise than by payment, will be created ; and those struggles between the debtor and creditor, which are so fatal to republics, and which we witnessed in the interval between the conclusion of the war

for independence and the adoption of our constitution, will be revived.

A precedent for this individual depravity will, it is much to be feared, be found in the example of the government. The ordinary resources of revenue being dried up, the fairest claims on the nation will be disregarded, and its most solemn engagements violated.

It is not among the least of the evils which may reasonably be apprehended, that the oppressive measures devised for the execution of this oppressive system, will gradually deaden the sense of real liberty, and accustom the American people to a despotism of the most ferocious kind—the despotism of faction. The fiercer passions will be kindled into a flame, will magnify petty offences into enormous crimes, and in order to gratify the malignity of party rage, will prostrate all those barriers which defend and preserve freedom.—Nor ought the danger that we are rushing into a war with Britain, to be lightly estimated. The ordinary calamities incident to such a war, form the smallest objection to it : It leads infallibly to a still closer connection with France, and the independence of no nation has survived an alliance with that power. Her friendship is still more formidable than her enmity.

These are the evils, in which a perseverance in the system commenced by our rulers, must involve the United States. And for what valuable purpose shall we encounter them ? Let it be admitted, that our embargo, in some degree, impairs the resources of Great Britain, and that it is our true interest so to do ; yet the injuries it inflicts on her, can bear no proportion to those it heaps on ourselves. What should we say of the individual who, finding himself seized by a person standing behind him, should pass his sword through his own body, that its point might scratch his adversary ?

That the individuals, whose foreign prejudices and erroneous calculations have drawn upon their country the difficulties and embarrassments we now experience, should desperately plunge forward into still deeper difficulties and more perplexing embarrassments, may be accounted for from the obstinate and personal pride

of men, who would feel a diminution of importance from the acknowledgment, that themselves or their idol were fallible. But the mass of the people feel not the same inducements to persevere in error. However misguided they may be, they intend to promote the prosperity of their country. However severe the pressure, they are taught by those to whom they have given their confidence, to believe that national honour requires a prolongation of national suffering. In this belief, they bear with patience the worse than useless burden which their rulers have imposed on them.

The sentiment is too laudible not to be treated with respect. Mistaken as is its application, weak as are the pretensions of the advocates of the present system, to be the real guardians of national honour, the subject demands, and shall receive, a dispassionate consideration.

A FARMER.

NO. III.

THE question now to be discussed, is this—Does the honour of the United States demand a perseverance in that system, which our rulers have adopted, and are still pursuing ?

A question more important to the American people, one which ought more to engage the attention of the patriot and the statesman, cannot be proposed. For, in my judgment, national honour and national interest, can never be in opposition to each other. However the case of the moment may be consulted, a nation can never promote its real interest, by the abandonment of its honour. But it is genuine honour, which maintains this high rank in the catalogue of national virtues ; not that spurious honour, which with its deceptive light beguiles, like an *ignis fatuus*, those who trust themselves to its guidance, from the true path leading to happiness, into irremediable perdition.

In what does this genuine honor consist ? Certainly not in an obstinate adherence to error. If measures have been adopted which disappoint the hopes of their projectors, and instead of producing the advantages attached to them by a feverish and sublimated imagination, have a direct tendency to ruin the nation ; honour can never require, that we should bind our destinies to those measures, and perish rather than change them. If in private life an individual, wearied with the prosperity, which resulted from conducting his affairs in the usual way, should devise some new system, and stake his reputation on its success, no wise man would think, that honour required a pertinacious perseverance in that system, after experience had demonstrated that, instead of fulfilling his visionary expectations, it was leading him to certain destruction. His own pride might induce him to embrace ruin rather than give up his pretensions to infallibility, but every reasonable man would think him a subject more proper for the mad house than for imitation. Infallibility is the attribute of the Deity, not of man ; and honour can never require, that our actions should be regulated on

the presumption, that we possess a quality which belongs not to our nature.

Since absolute exemption from error is denied to us, true wisdom and true honour are best consulted by correcting, with the least possible injury, any false step we may have made. If we have lost our way, we cannot too quickly turn back and take the right road. Every step we take in the wrong one, carries us further from our place of destination. The guide who has misled us, may still insist, that we ought to follow him ; but as travellers, it is our interest to retrace our steps, and to recover the path from which we have wandered. We call on foreign nations to retrace their steps, and have never supposed that they would degrade themselves by so doing. Why then should America be self-degraded, by changing a rash measure inconsiderately adopted ? Is America the only power on earth whose errors no experience can be permitted to correct, or who would be disgraced by admitting the possibility that our rulers may be fallible ?

I discard then altogether the position, that national honour requires us to adhere to the system of annihilating our commerce, merely because we have adopted that system. Its wisdom is still a proper subject for consideration, and we can now consider it with the lights furnished by experience.

Since the question, what course does national honour require us to pursue, is not closed forever, but may be freely examined, unprejudiced by the experiments which our theorists have made, I intreat my fellow citizens to reflect well on the principle, which ought to guide them in deciding it.

We may define national honour, in the actual case to which it is now applied, to be a reasonable and firm assertion of our independence, and of our *unquestionable* rights, by a judicious exertion of the best means we have the power to employ.

In exploring the field opened to us by this definition, it becomes essentially necessary, to take a rapid view of the relative situation and designs of the belligerents, of their conduct respectively towards the United States, and of their motives for that conduct.

This view will aid us in marking out that course, which ought to be pursued by ourselves.

The person executing this task would be unfaithful to his duty, if he sought to conform his statements to public prejudice, rather than to the fact. With truth for his guide, he must represent things as they are, not as the passions of party have painted them. If he is charged with want of attachment to his own country, the charge will be unfounded, for impartiality of statement does not imply indifference of feeling. The former is necessary to a clear perception of our real interests; the latter, were we even in the wrong, would be criminal.

France is essentially a military nation. Her genius is military. Her character, therefore, leads to conquest, and her power is to be extended by the subjugation of other nations. The connection she seeks with them, is to be maintained by force, not by a reciprocity of interests.

Britain, on the contrary, is a commercial, and cannot become a military nation. Her territory is immutably limited by the ocean, and she cannot extend it. Commerce, not conquest, is, from necessity, her object. For this purpose she plants distant colonies, and exercises dominion over remote regions, which may be protected by her fleets, and in which her power may be maintained without large armies. Her connection with other nations is cemented by mutual interest, and must be dissolved when that mutual interest ceases to preserve it.

The natural tendency of the French character to conquest, is fully developed, and is pushed to its extreme point, by the consummate soldier, whose chains are worn throughout the continent of Europe. He has exhibited himself also without a mask. The slave of no passion but of his gigantic ambition; incapable of being diverted from his object by any sentiment of honour or feeling of humanity; patient and impetuous by turns; watching with a penetrating eye over all the other powers, he discerns and turns to account their vices

or weaknesses, and employs indifferently, force and fraud, terror and seduction, for the accomplishment of his grand scheme of universal dominion. No submission can preserve his friendship, and every ally becomes his vassal. He acknowledges no other connection than that of master and slave, nor can any thing but open and manly resistance rescue any portion of the earth from his grasp. His promises are cobwebs, which he breaks at pleasure, and his faith is plighted only for the more sure destruction of those who trust to it.

The genius, the resources, and the character of the two nations, and of the chief of one of them, have given a character to the war, which they wage against each other. On the part of France, it is a war of choice, a war of conquest, a war which has for its object the total extinction of the British power, as a necessary step to the conquest of the world.

On the part of Great Britain, it is a war of necessity, which she could not avoid, and cannot terminate; a war for existence; a war on which depends her own liberty, and that of other nations—Let France succeed, and who is so infatuated as to believe, that there remains on earth a power, which can place limits to his ambition? Let Britain succeed, and she only preserves herself and the world. She makes no conquests, and can make none. On France she could make no impression. The whole continent of Europe would still be impenetrable by her arms, and every part of it would still exhibit a force she could not be frantic enough to encounter.

The character of the war, the character and the designs of the belligerents, ought to be kept in view during the examination of their conduct towards the United States. This examination will be confined to those measures, which have been adopted during the present war, and which affect our sovereignty and our neutral rights—A more extensive range is declined, not because it would produce a different result, but because it would lead to a length of enquiry, transcending the plan of these essays.

The decree rendered at Berlin by the emperor of France, in November, 1806, claims our first attention. In violation of the established law of nations and of solemn treaties, this decree declares all the dominions of Great Britain in a state of blockade, prohibits all intercourse with those dominions, and all commerce in articles of their growth or manufacture. The extravagance of this edict is augmented, by the consideration, that the blockaded country was the mistress of the ocean, while the blockading power was unable to station a squadron before any single port of her enemy.—The act then is an undisguised attack on the sovereignty of neutrals, and an unequivocal invasion of their rights. It is attended by no palliating circumstance, and is alike incapable of being excused or misunderstood. It is an authority to French cruisers to commit indiscriminate plunder, and the robbery it licences can be justified by no plausible pretext.

By those who can find nothing to censure in the conduct of Bonaparte, it is pretended, that England has been herself the first to avow the principle of proclamation blockades, and to carry it into practice.

So far as respects any avowal of the British government, this assertion is positively untrue. The principle is not, and never has been avowed. No instance exists, in which it has been recognized, as the rule by which that nation would regulate its conduct. The reverse is the fact. The British doctrine has uniformly been, that a blockade to be lawful, must be effective.

The practice under the rule, does not admit of such complete demonstration. From the nature of the thing, the force which shall constitute an effective blockade, is susceptible of no precise definition. It may vary according to circumstances; and impartial men may differ with respect to the fact. It is certain, that a very extensive coast has been declared in a state of blockade. The legitimacy of the order, depends on the force employed in its execution. What this force was, is a matter of evidence on which few in this country are enabled to decide. Thus much I think may, without fear of contration, be hazarded. The naval power of

Britain is sufficient for such an effective blockade, of every port from Brest to the mouth of the Elbe, as to render the attempt to enter any of them manifestly dangerous. No evidence has yet been furnished, that such was not the fact, while that coast was blockaded ; and to pronounce this decision without evidence, is certainly assuming what we have no right to assume.

It is also to be recollected, that these measures of blockade on the part of England, grew out of measures previously taken by France, which are not sanctioned by the laws and usages of nations. She undertook to prohibit the introduction of British goods into the continent of Europe, not only through her own dominions, but through those of other nations, some of which professed to be neutral. This prohibition extended to neutral, as well as belligerent bottoms. In this respect, France unquestionably transcended those rights, which war is admitted to give ; and even that part of the prohibition, which may in strictness be deemed legitimate, is a very harsh and unusual exercise of belligerent privileges. It might be expected to be retorted by a harsh exercise of belligerent rights on the part of Great Britain. But the enquiry will not be further pursued, because it is manifest, that the contest on this subject can furnish no apology for the Berlin decree.

This exterminating war then, upon neutral commerce, under which the trade of the United States is doomed to expire, was obviously commenced by France. It will appear the less excusable, and will exhibit in stronger colours the haughty and despotic character of the tyrant with whom this system originated, if the advantages derived by the belligerents respectively from the trade which he has annihilated, be taken into consideration.

So decided is the superiority of Great Britain on the ocean, that her enemies scarcely venture to spread a canvass on that element. To neutrals, therefore, almost exclusively, was France indebted for the exportation of her wines and brandies, and for the importation of those rich colonial products, which habit has

rendered essential to comfortable existence. Britain, on the contrary, owes nothing to neutral bottoms. Her own commercial marine is equal to all her purposes, and she asks no aid from foreign navigation. Yet France, thus benefitted by neutral commerce, has sought to exterminate it by an act of violence, which might be expected to convert every independent neutral into a mortal foe.

If this outrage on public law, and on the sovereignty of nations, had spent its force on neutrals, it could have conferred no right on other belligerents to adopt similar measures. But such is not the fact. The object of the Berlin decree was to wound Great Britain, and its effect, if submitted to, would be not only an insult to her sovereignty, but a permanent injury to her interests also.

Although France was unable to carry this decree into complete execution, she was able so far to execute it, as to divert into her own ports a considerable portion of that neutral commerce, which was usually destined for England, and to introduce into France those valuable articles which are imported from the Indies, on better terms than they could be introduced into England. No belligerent, especially one warring for existence, can be expected to submit to such a state of things. If she possesses the means of retorting upon her enemy the injuries intended for herself, she will employ them. The suffering neutral ought, in justice, to ascribe the calamities resulting from such a contest, to the power which commences it.

But to estimate rightly the relative demerits of France and England in this respect, a more full view ought to be taken of the subject. The interdiction of neutral navigation by Bonaparte, is not to be contemplated as a single insulated fact. It is part of a system, it is a link of that great chain of violence, by which he hopes so to shackle and confine the commerce of England, as to enfeeble the sinews of her maritime strength, and finally to overturn her maritime power. It is obvious, that from her manufactures and com-

merce, Britain derives the means of supporting that immense navy, which enables her to defend herself, and to place some limits to the enormous power of France. Deprive her of every market for these manufactures, destroy this commerce, and you dry up the sources, which nourish and recruit her navy, and leave it to perish for want of support.

Arduous as this attempt may appear, it was not too difficult for Bonaparte. From every power on the continent of Europe he exacts, as the indispensable price of a precarious and temporary existence, implicit obedience to his mandate on this favourite point. Their ports must be shut, not only to British commerce, but to British manufactures also.—To complete this stupendous plan, and close every avenue through which British manufactures might pass into other countries, the Berlin decree was issued, by which the British dominions were declared to be in a state of blockade, and all articles of the growth or manufacture of those dominions, found on land or in neutral bottoms, were declared to be good prize. This system, if carried into complete execution, would obviously prostrate his enemy at his feet. For its complete execution, he relied much on his actual power, and much on his influence over those states whom his power could not immediately reach, but who trembled at its approach.

Was it to be expected, that Great Britain would become the quiet and unresisting victim of a system, aimed so directly and so obviously at her safety? Could she be required not to oppose the whole system by such a counter-system, as, in her judgment, would defeat its object? If self-preservation be the primary law of nature, I know not on what principle those neutrals, who have not resisted with effect, so far as was in their power, this gross infraction of their rights, this arbitrary assumption of their sovereignty, and attempt to convert them into the mere instruments of hostility against a nation fighting for existence, in the cause of human liberty, can consider that nation as the ag-

gressor, when she defends herself by those measures of retaliation that are within her reach.

Yet, if we attend to the language of our administration, to the debates in congress, to the sentiments retailed to the people through the ministerial presses, we should lose sight of France, and consider Great Britain as the original aggressor—as the principal, if not the sole offender!

A FARMER.

NO. IV.

THAT a neutral may permit itself to be used as an instrument of hostility by one belligerent against another, without forfeiting its neutral character, has not been in terms asserted ; but it is alleged by those who, overlooking the aggressions of France, labour to turn all our resentments against England, that the United States have never permitted themselves to be so used. In support of this assertion, it is contended, that, until the condemnation of the *Horizon*, the United States had a right to consider the Berlin decree as inapplicable to them, and consequently were not bound to manifest a determination to resist it. The orders of November, 1807, therefore, these politicians say, derive neither justification nor excuse from the previous measures of France.

Let this assertion be candidly investigated.

That the Berlin decree does, in its terms, as positively include the United States, as if they had been expressly named, must be acknowledged by all who have read that document. When language is ambiguous, we may justifiably suspend our opinions of the intention of the person using it, until that intention shall be explained ; but when the terms used are unequivocal ; when they can import but one sense ; they must be taken in that sense, unless there are well founded motives for believing, that they have been employed inadvertently ; in which case, prudence requires, that the person or the nation they implicate, should take immediate and decisive steps to obtain satisfactory explanations ; and should, in the mean time, prepare for the event of the resolution being construed according to its expression.

The decree of Berlin, on its face, furnishes no ground for the hope, that those terms, which comprehend the United States, were inadvertently or unintentionally employed. Let us then enquire, whether there are any extrinsic circumstances to warrant a construction in direct opposition to the plain language of the instrument itself.

On the day preceding that, on which the decree bears date, the report, on which it was founded, was made to the emperor by his minister of exterior relations. This report, after the usual declamation about British tyranny and injustice, recommends that the British Isles be declared in a state of blockade; that every Englishman be made a prisoner of war; and that all English property be confiscated. The report then proceeds—"Since England has resolved on annihilating all industry on the continent, whoever carries on a trade in English merchandize, favours her designs to the utmost of his power, and becomes her accomplice. Let all trade in English merchandize be declared illegal."

The universality of the phrases employed, derives additional force from the object contemplated, and from the particular means relied on to effect that object. The avowed object was, the annihilation of the trade and manufactures of Great Britain; and a proclamation of blockade is intended exclusively for neutrals. How then could the declaration, that all who traded in English merchandize should be considered as the accomplices of England, and that such trade was illegal, be understood to exclude that neutral, who traded in English merchandize more than any and every other? In his letter of the 24th November, 1807, to general Armstrong, the minister thus exposes the absurd fallacy of such an opinion:—"His majesty regrets, without doubt, to have been forced to recur to such measures. He knows all that the commercial classes may have to suffer in consequence of them, particularly those, who, having habitual relations with England, using a common language, and often mixing their interests, might more frequently occasion an apprehension of some commercial connivance with the English, inasmuch as they would have greater facilities in covering it. This circumstance made it necessary to use towards them precautions more exact, and an increasing watchfulness, in order not to be exposed to abuses, which might result from a less constant vigilance."

The policy adopted by France, is here acknowledged to be such, that its application to the United States must be still more rigorous than to other nations.

The decree itself was framed in the spirit and in the broad terms of the report, and was instantly carried into execution, under the immediate inspection of the emperor. English goods imported into neutral countries, and neutral vessels which had come from England, were seized so soon as those countries were occupied by the French, without excepting those vessels and goods which belonged to American citizens from the general calamity. On the 24th of November, three days after the date of the Berlin decree, it was notified to the nominally free city of Hamburgh. From this notification the following extract is taken:—
 “ All English merchandize that may be found in the city, in the harbour, or on the territory of Hamburgh, *no matter to whom they may belong*, shall be confiscated.”—In conformity with this notification, American property to a great amount was seized.

This was a practical and unequivocal application of the decree to the United States.

This arbitrary edict was announced by order of his imperial majesty, to his vassal kings ; and measures for carrying it into execution were adopted by them. From the decree made on this occasion, by the most degraded of them, (the king of Spain,) the following extract is taken :—“ So likewise will be confiscated, all merchandize which may be met with, *although it may be met with in neutral vessels*, whenever it is destined for the ports of England, or her Isles.”—It is admitted by our administration, that American vessels were captured under this decree.

The circumstances of the world were opposed to the opinion, that the Berlin decree might be construed, against its letter and spirit, in favour of the United States.

The then nominally neutral commercial powers of Europe, were Portugal and Denmark. The latter certainly had claims to an exemption from the operation of this measure, which were not inferior to any that could be advanced by this country. Her treaty

was equally violated by it, and her partiality for France had been as undisguised. Yet it has never been suspected that Denmark was not included in it. The merchant vessels of Denmark and Portugal united, did not carry half the British goods that were carried in American vessels. Consequently the motives which induced the decree, urged its application to the United States, much more strongly than to any other neutral.

Every probability then was against the opinion, that a decree, which, in its terms comprehended the United States with other neutral powers, would not be applied to them. Every extrinsic circumstance concurred with the language of the instrument, to prove that it was designed for the United States.

But it has been alleged, that the answer of the minister of marine and colonies, to an application made by general Armstrong, in December, 1806, was sufficiently explicit to quiet the United States, and to satisfy Great Britain.

It can scarcely be denied, even by the administration, that a decree, so positive and unequivocal as that of Berlin, ought to be satisfactorily explained away only by language equally positive and unequivocal. The United States had a right to demand, and ought to have demanded, an express and public declaration from the proper authority, that this edict was inapplicable to them; nor ought they to have been satisfied with any inferior explanation. To have reposed with implicit and unsuspecting confidence, on declarations of a totally different character, is to become the willing dupe of those declarations, and can be justified by no government to the people whom it rules.

Was the letter of Mr. Decres of this explicit and satisfactory description? Quite the reverse. It abounds in evasions and subterfuge.

In his first paragraph he says--“ I consider the imperial decree of the 21st of November last, as thus far, conveying no modification of the regulations at present observed in France, with regard to neutral navigation, nor consequently of the convention of the 30th of September, 1800, with the United States of America.”

It ought not to have escaped our administration, nor could it have escaped that of Great Britain, that no distinction is here made between the United States and other neutral powers. The decree is understood to apply to them in the same manner as to others. The declaration, then, that Great Britain and her dominions were in a state of blockade ; that all trade with them was unlawful ; that every vessel laden with a cargo of the growth or manufacture of her dominions, although a neutral, might be captured, and was, with her cargo, liable to confiscation ; was either inapplicable to any neutral, or was applicable to the United States. If these regulations were inapplicable to neutrals, for whom were they designed ?—certainly not for belligerents.

It ought to have occurred to all having an interest in the subject, that this absurd construction could not safely be put on the answer of the French minister. That he might explain the whole sentence by declaring, that he considered the blockade of England, notified by his imperial master, as a legitimate blockade ; and then, “without any modification of the regulations observed in France, with regard to neutral navigation,” all the penalties imposed by the decree on that “navigation,” would necessarily follow.

Although he deems this a sufficient answer to the questions propounded by Mr. Armstrong, he proceeds afterwards to be more particular, but not to be less evasive. The first article of the decree, he says, furnishes “no reason for enquiring what interpretation, or restriction, or extension may be given to it.”

2d. “Seizures, contrary to the present regulations, concerning cruising, shall not be allowed to the captors.”

What were the then “present regulations concerning cruising ?” Did the Berlin decree form a part of them ? At any rate, did they not subject to capture and condemnation every vessel trading to a blockaded port, or in prohibited articles ? But whether these subterfuges were intended or not, this answer insinuates no discrimination between American and other neutral bottoms.

3d. " That an American vessel cannot be taken at sea for the mere reason, that she is going to a port of England, or returning from one ; because, conformable with the 7th article of the said decree, we are limited in France not to admit vessels coming from England, or the English colonies."

The style of this observation is not that of a minister, speaking from authority, but that of a man reasoning on an instrument, with no other information than was furnished by the instrument itself; and the reasoning is most obviously false. There is certainly no incompatibility between two articles in the same decree : the one subjecting a neutral to capture on the high seas, for trading with England ; and the other, subjecting the same vessel to seizure in the ports of France.

But it cannot escape observation, that Mr. Decres says only, that a vessel cannot be taken for the mere reason that she is going to, or returning from a port of England ; he does not add, or for the reason, that her cargo consists of articles of the growth or manufacture of Great Britain. It is also observable, that the reasons he assigns for his opinion, are precisely as applicable to the vessels of other neutrals, as to those of America.— If he did believe the decree to be inapplicable to the United States, it was because they were neutrals, not because its terms furnished any exception in their favour.

The fourth and last article of this celebrated letter, relates only to particular articles of the decree, and will be found not to be more satisfactory than those which preceded it. Like the third, it is apparently the mere reasoning of an individual, having no information from his government, and no authority to declare its intentions.

Never was a more evasive and equivocal answer given on so interesting a subject, nor one which less warranted the opinion which has been avowed, in consequence of it. There is certainly no part of it, which insinuates the idea, that any discrimination was intended between the United States and other neutrals.

As if some secret respect for character, induced Mr. Decres to secure himself against the future imputation

of duplicity, he adds—"but it would be proper, that
 " your excellency should communicate with the min-
 " ister of exterior relations, as to what concerns the
 " correspondence of the citizens of the United States
 " with England."

Had the answer been as explicit as it is ambiguous ; had it in plain terms averred the opinion, that the Berlin decree was inapplicable ; this reference was sufficient to strip it of all authority, and to make the opinion that of a mere unauthorised individual, not that of his government. Mr. Madison's letter of the 22d of May 1807, evinces, that he so understood this reference.

If this letter justified, in the judgment of the president, the opinion which he has professed, even in an official message to congress, whence is it, that he has never, even in his letters to general Armstrong, reproached the French government with duplicity ? That the letters of the secretary of state exhibit no such charge, warrants the conclusion, either, that he thinks it could not be supported, or that the administration prefers the imputation on itself of excessive credulity, to the odious task of taxing his imperial majesty with deception.

Is it possible, that our executive can have been satisfied with this answer ? Can they possibly have believed, that a nation struggling for existence, and having a deep interest in the subject to which it related, would, or ought, to have been satisfied with it ?

It must be admitted, that the letter of Mr. Decres, furnished no justifiable ground for the opinion, that any exception from the Berlin decree, in favour of the United States, was meditated by his master. But it is alledged, that in point of fact, it was never applied to the United States, until late in October, 1807, when the *Horizon* was finally condemned ; and that, till then, there was no reason for believing that it would be so applied.

This extraordinary assertion, has been made for the purpose of supporting the no less extraordinary declaration, that the orders of council were issued at a time, when it was not known in England that the Berlin decree would be applied to the United States. No other

mouvement can be conjectured for taking the final condemnation of the *Horizon*, instead of the declaration of the emperor, made in the preceding September. To an official application on the subject, he answered, that "as he did not think proper to express any exception in his decree, there is no ground for making any in its execution, in relation to whomsoever."—This answer having been as public as it was decisive, must have been immediately known to the British cabinet, and must consequently have removed every doubt, if any before existed, respecting the construction of the decree to which it related.

But the idea, that a regulation, which in terms comprehends the United States, may be considered as inapplicable to them until executed by a judicial sentence, is as novel as it is absurd. Admit this principle, and the orders of council are not yet in force against America. But the principle is intended for French decrees only, and is dropped when those of the enemies of his imperial majesty come into view. Unquestionably, the promulgation of such a decree, is its application to the United States, and the first capture of a vessel or seizure of property under it, is its execution.

That the property of American citizens was seized under this decree, immediately after its publication, is notorious—and that captures were soon made under it, is admitted. The *Horizon* herself was captured in May, 1807; and the secretary of state, in his letter to Mr. Armstrong, of May, 1807, observes—"there are proofs that the West India privateers have, under colour of the edict, committed depredations, which will constitute just claims of redress from their government."—In his letter of the 8th of January, 1807, to Mr. Erskine, lord viscount Howick, speaking of the Berlin decree, says—"You will state to the American government, that his majesty relies with confidence on their good sense and firmness, in resisting pretensions, which, if suffered to take effect, must prove so destructive to the commerce of all neutral nations. His majesty has learnt, that the measures announced in the decree *have already, in some instan-*

“*ces, been carried into execution by the privateers of the enemy*; and there could be no doubt, but his majesty would have an undisputed right to exercise a just retaliation.”

Captures under this decree, then, had been made in the European seas previous to the month of January, 1807, and in the West Indian seas previous to the month of May, in the same year. Yet no disposition to resist it was ever manifested. No resentment appears to have been excited by it. On the contrary, a treaty negotiated with Great Britain was returned without being laid before the senate, and one of the most decisive objections to it, was, that the British minister, at the time of his signature, addressed a note to the American negotiators, declaring that his government did not mean to relinquish its right to retaliate on France this atrocious outrage on neutral rights, if contrary to expectation, the United States should submit to it.

A belligerent, affected by the aggressions of its enemy on neutrals, has a right to expect information of the measures those neutrals will take to maintain their neutrality. If then, in point of fact, the application of the Berlin decree to the United States had been doubtful, it would have comported with that fairness of conduct which a neutral, under such circumstances, ought to observe, to give Great Britain express assurances, that the United States would not acquiesce in, but would resist so flagrant a violation of their rights. No such assurances appear to have been ever given. On the contrary, our government continued to manifest, both in its language and conduct, the most decided rigour to England, and partiality to France. In the mean time, the Berlin decree was executed abroad, and by openly obtaining *certificates of origin* from the French consuls, it was practically submitted to at home; nor did our government in any manner discountenance this practice.

Such was the state of facts in November 1807, when the British orders of council were issued.

After they were published, but before they were known in America, the embargo was imposed. This

measure, therefore, in its origin, had no reference to those orders. It was predicated on the previous state of things, and would have been adopted had they never existed.

What secret communications may have been made by any of the belligerent cabinets to our administration, I pretend not to conjecture; but the state of things on which this measure was in fact predicated, was this—

The emperor of France had openly assumed the determination to prohibit all trade with the British dominions, or in articles of the growth or manufacture of those dominions. He had compelled the reluctant and vassal states of Europe, to enter into a league for the execution of this system, so prejudicial to themselves. He had declared it to be the common interest of the commercial world, and that all ought to unite in it. He had issued an edict, enjoining this course on all neutral powers, and subjecting to confiscation the property of all those who should dare to disobey his mandate.

Some doubt having been entertained, whether this imperial edict extended to America, his majesty was consulted on the subject, and declared, that it did.— This communication being received, the embargo was instantly adopted.

I will not hazard a conjecture on the motives, which might lead to this measure; but, without fear of contradiction, I venture to say, that national honour is not to be found among them.

A FARMER.

NO. V.

It being apparent that a sense of national honour contributed in no degree to the adoption of the embargo, it remains to enquire, whether that noble and elevated sentiment demands its continuance. Those who maintain the affirmative of this question, must do so on one of two grounds. They must either contend, that a system once adopted, can never be relinquished without disgrace, however certain the ruin it involves ; or, that subsequent events have so changed the original character of the measure, that perseverance in it, to our destruction, is now exacted by national honour.

To the observations made in a preceding number on the first part of this proposition, I will only add, that a nation, which has entered into engagements with others, for the attainment of a common object, may feel itself bound by those engagements, to persevere in measures extremely onerous to itself, so long as that perseverance is required by its ally. But a nation acting singly, and unconnected with others, can never feel an honorary obligation to adhere to a system obviously inefficacious, and leading infallibly to ruin, merely because that system has been adopted.

I pass to the second part of the proposition.

The events which have either come to our knowledge or have occurred since the imposition of the embargo, and which can influence its continuance, are the orders of the British council, the various edicts of the French emperor, the diplomatic communications of this country with the belligerents, and the revolutions in Spain and Portugal.

The orders of council commence with retaliating strictly on France the principle of the Berlin decree. But from the rigour of this rule there are several exceptions. One of great importance is, that the direct trade between the United States and the colonies of the enemy is left open. Another, that vessels destined for France, after the knowledge of this blockading decree, are not to be captured and confiscated, but to be warned to sail for a British port. Connected with this latter exception, is another, which, far from being considered

as a mitigation of the rigour of the rule, has been treated as its most obnoxious feature. This is the admission of the voyage to France after entering a British port, subject to the condition of receiving a licence from the government, which, in some instances, is only granted on the payment of a transit duty. This has been denominated "tribute," and being artfully considered as an independent measure, has been represented to the American people by their rulers with so much exaggeration, that the enormities of France are reduced in their estimation to petty indiscretions.

In noticing this regulation, I do not mean to justify it, as it stands connected with that which first compels the American vessel to enter a British port. On the contrary, I concur in the policy, making it penal for vessels, under such circumstances, to sail with these licences. Great Britain has certainly a right to impose what export duty she pleases, but not to compel foreign vessels to enter her ports, and thereby become liable to that duty. Yet this subject, like every other, ought to be fairly understood by a nation, which is to make it the foundation of measures extremely interesting to itself.

If a port be actually blockaded, so as to give a right to prohibit the entry of neutrals, no relaxation of this prohibition would be offensive. If a vessel should be allowed to enter, on paying all the value of her cargo, her owner might, at his discretion, accept or reject the terms, and his nation would not feel itself concerned in his making or declining the contract. The only question in which his government could interfere, would respect the legitimacy of the prohibition. Admit this, and any terms of relaxation would be exclusively for the consideration of the neutral navigator to whom they were proposed.

So with respect to the orders under consideration. If the principle of retaliation, which Great Britain has assumed, be admissible, a rigorous adherence to that principle in its full extent, would leave no other distinction between her and France, than may be drawn from the difference which might exist in the manner and temper with which each applied the principle, and from

the circumstance that the latter has voluntarily originated the system, while the former has entered into it long after her adversary, and with professions of much reluctance.

Even under this view of the subject, the qualification of the rule cannot justly render it more offensive. To warn a vessel bound for France to enter a British port, cannot be more objectionable than to capture or burn that vessel ; nor can the offer of an election to sell the cargo in Great Britain, or to transmit it under a British licence to France, be more injurious than to confiscate that cargo.

With respect to the duty, it is worthy of remark, that much solicitude was manifested by the British cabinet, to discover whether a total prohibition of the importation into France of certain articles on which it is imposed, or their admission burdened with a transit duty, would be least offensive to the United States. Our minister having very properly refused to indicate any opinion on the point, it was determined to give the owner his election. This was particularly the case on imposing the duty on cotton.

Without hesitating for an instant in concurring with the government of my country, in the adoption of proper measures to prevent the payment of this duty by vessels compelled to enter a British port, truth requires a fair statement of the motives which induced the imposition of it.

The decrees of France not only prohibit the introduction of this, and of all other articles into England, but constitute a complete and unprecedented system of war on all English manufactures. Nothing would give such effect to this system, as the substitution of goods made on the continent in the place of those heretofore imported from England. In rejecting this system, therefore, Great Britain may be expected to direct her power, in a particular manner, to the prevention of the ability to make this substitution. Either the principle of retaliation would be entirely abandoned, or would be applied with peculiar watchfulness to those raw materials, which might nourish rival manufactories. Of these, cotton is among the most essential.

The orders of council then, even if unauthorised by the previous conduct of France, are much less injurious to the United States than the Berlin decree. If they are authorised by that conduct, all the evils resulting from them, are to be ascribed exclusively to France. Without determining the question of right, any moderate and reasonable man must admit, that it is at least involved in so much doubt, as not to exclude negotiation, but to constitute a fair subject for amicable and honourable compromise.

Whether they derive extenuation from the circumstances which gave birth to them, or admit of no palliation, they constitute the sum of British offence.

France has added to her original aggression, the two decrees of Milan and Bayonne. These subject to capture and condemnation every American vessel which shall even be visited by a British cruiser, although bound for France, and laden with a cargo the produce of the United States. They consequently subject to capture and condemnation, every American vessel which swims the ocean. They also sequester all the property which American citizens have trusted into France under the relations of peace and the faith of treaties.

In the execution of these decrees, means the most hostile and the most unjustifiable have been employed, and practices the most ferocious have been indulged with impunity. Their sea-rovers have been permitted, without censure, to disregard those forms, the observance of which, for the purpose of humanity, the civilized world requires from enemies, and to burn those vessels which they meet on the high seas. Our unoffending citizens too, are treated with a severity, which war itself would scarcely justify.

These measures are in exact conformity with the deportment of the French government, in its diplomatic intercourse with that of the United States. His imperial majesty undertakes to decide on our most momentous concerns, and to determine for us the important question of peace and war. Anticipating the time when we shall acknowledge his right to relieve us from the burden of self government, he already charges himself with the guidance of the nation.

In a letter to general Armstrong, dated the 24th of November, 1807, Mr. Champagny, speaking of the complaints which had been preferred in consequence of the execution of the Berlin decree, on the property of American citizens, avows in terms, the object of that measure. He says, "All the difficulties which have given rise to your reclamations, sir, would be removed with ease, if the government of the United States, after complaining in vain of the injustice and violations of England, took with the whole continent the part of guaranteeing itself therefrom."

Thus it is confessed, that to compel the United States to join that coalition against English commerce, which had been forced upon the continent of Europe, was one of the motives for the decree of Berlin.

In a subsequent letter, Mr. Champagny discloses unequivocally, the very interesting fact, that the property of our injured fellow citizens was sequestered in France for the purpose of forcing the United States into a war with Great Britain, and that its confiscation or release, depended on the measures they should adopt for making a common cause with the continent of Europe.—The embargo has been considered as a pledge, that we are engaged in that common cause; yet the sequestration is continued, to secure our future fidelity and obedience.

The resolution of Bonaparte to force us into the war, is unquestionably demonstrated by other testimony, not yet in possession of the public. In a debate on foreign relations, Mr. Masters, an independent and intelligent democratic member, said, "It was the determination of the emperor to compel us to take part in the war, either as friends or allies. If the nation does not know this, I know it, and you know it, Mr. Chairman. The demands are positive; and because we have not promptly obeyed, France has swept, by sequestration and confiscation, all the American property from Italy to Antwerp, amounting to more than one hundred millions of livres."

I forbear to give vent to the feelings which such indignities and injuries must excite in the bosom of every real American. Prudence, perhaps, requires their suppression.

After this disclosure, a disclosure the truth of which is but too well supported by the testimony in possession of the public, who, without unspeakable mortification, can read that part of the speech of the same gentleman, which develops the motives for continuing the embargo, and for the last messages to Europe?

The measures of France and Great Britain having been reviewed, the propositions we have made to them will now receive a brief consideration.

That made to France is not completely understood. The instructions to our minister in Paris are not published; and their purport is not to be collected from his letters, since he did not dare to address an official note to the French government, on receiving them, proposing a repeal of the Berlin decree as a motive for removing the embargo; and the president is too vague in his message to congress to give any precise idea on the subject. If we may reason from general Armstrong's letter of the 6th of August, 1808, we are led irresistibly to the conclusion,* [that if France rescinded the Berlin decrees, war would be declared against Great Britain,] should that power not yield every point demanded by the United States, formed a part of the proposition.—The message of the president at the commencement of the session, and the debates in congress, countenance this opinion.

Over the proposition to England, the same veil of mystery is not drawn. To that power nothing further was offered, than a suspension of the embargo with regard to her, provided she would previously revoke her orders of council.

It is said that this offer took from Great Britain every pretext for continuing her orders, and that its failure demonstrates the hostile temper of that nation.—While we acquiesce with respectful silence in an adherence to her system on the part of France, so supercilious and determined, that our minister could not venture even to make to his imperial majesty the proposition transmitted by our government, the United States resound with preparations for war, because England has not accepted the terms our president has deigned to offer her.

Note.—Here is an *hiatus* in the original manuscript, supplied by the editor.

Let this subject be seriously examined.

The orders of council were not occasioned by the embargo. They were not intended as a measure of retaliation against the United States, but against France. Their publication was accompanied with the declaration, that they should be co-existent with the French decrees, and should be revoked the instant those decrees were revoked.

These decrees not having been adopted in consequence of the embargo, their dependence on it, or connection with it, is not distinctly perceived; nor does its repeal appear to furnish a motive for their revocation, unless that measure would amount to an effectual resistance to that invasion of neutral rights, which they were intended to retaliate.

Our rulers have assumed the fact, that the removal of the embargo as respects England, while it continued with regard to France, would constitute resistance to the edicts of the latter power.

This conclusion does not appear to be correct. The embargo would neither authorise nor enable a single American vessel on a voyage to or from the dominions of Great Britain to resist a French cruiser, who should capture her on that account. Our trade with those dominions would consequently remain, as heretofore, subject to the full operation of the French decrees, while the revocation of the orders of council would leave our trade to France unmolested.

But a continuance of the embargo with respect to France, it is said, would divert our whole trade from that nation still more effectually than the orders of council, and would consequently render those orders useless.

In examining this assertion, I waive all doubt respecting the good faith with which any stipulation prohibiting trade with France would be executed.

With whatever suspicions the open partiality of our administration for one of the belligerents might justly inspire the other, I will not presume that the nation would act with infidelity. Yet no delicacy restrains me from saying, that the prohibition might be easily evaded.—Vessels clearing out for Spanish or Portuguese ports on the Bay of Biscay, or for English ports on the

channel, could find their way, without much difficulty, into the adjacent ports of France. Should an English cruiser discover them in the fact of entering such port, it would not be lawful to capture them ; for capture in such case, would be equivalent to a reinstatement of the orders of council. And, although we take no umbrage at supplements being added to our embargo laws by France, for the purpose of condemning vessels not comprehended within them, we should not brook on the part of England, the capture of a vessel taken in the fact of violating both their letter and their spirit.

That our administration is itself perfectly persuaded of the futility of any attempt, to prevent articles once trusted to the open sea, from reaching a port where they are in great demand, is fairly admitted in the argument for continuing the embargo. The friends of that measure contend, that a permission to export our provisions and raw materials, even to those countries which respect our rights, would destroy its coercive properties, because those articles would infallibly be conveyed to Great Britain. No man can doubt the incompetency of regulations made in the United States, not enforced by a navy, effectually to restrain vessels navigating the high seas. Not even the present arbitrary system of Bonaparte, would amount to a total exclusion of American vessels from his ports. Favourites would be licensed, and would prosecute the trade with immense profit.

The proposition made to Great Britain then, contained nothing like resistance to the French decrees. Nor did it afford any security, that the trade to France would not be prosecuted to as great an extent as the emperor would tolerate ; consequently, it presented a state of things, not essentially variant from that which existed when the retaliating system was adopted.

This is not all. Nothing more completely assures an amicable adjustment of differences, than an amicable disposition. Terms offered by a government, whose dispositions are really friendly, will be much less rigidly scrutinized, than when offered by a power, whose unfriendly temper mingles itself with all its transactions.

I do not mean to say, that our negotiations with England, to be successful, ought to manifest for Great Britain that partiality, which characterises our negotiations with France ; but that they ought to be undertaken in the true spirit of conciliation, and conducted in that frank and honourable temper, which distinguished the negotiations of WASHINGTON and ADAMS. So far from this, the proposition did not even exhibit a temper friendly to accommodation. It manifested no inclination to suspend a coercive course, which America has for some time pursued. The non-intercourse law, that first step in the path marked out by French enmity to British commerce, and the proclamation, by which our ports were closed against British armed ships, while they remained open to those of her enemy, were both to continue in force ; our government did not even insinuate, that this hostile system might possibly be discontinued in the event of the removal of the orders of council.

What then is the amount of the proposition, the rejection of which is said to render war inevitable ? It is, that if Great Britain will abandon the principle of retorting on France the injuries which his imperial majesty seeks to inflict, by violating the law of nations on the subject of neutral commerce, we will open our ports and resume our trade, except that no vessel shall clear out for France—that those commercial restrictions, which were imposed for the purpose of humbling England, shall still remain ; and that our ports will still manifest our partiality to her enemy.

Could it have been expected, that such a proposition would be successful ? The English government receives daily proofs of the interminable animosity of our administration. The embargo itself is among the strong evidences of this sentiment. Having been imposed when the orders of council were unknown, it shows what congress would have done, had those orders never existed. It shews, that when commanded by France to suspend our commerce with Britain, and compelled by premature outrages to interrupt for a time its course with France, we will suspend it with all the world, to our own ruin, rather than allow Britain to participate in its advantages. With the recollection of

this fact, and of others not less decisive, how could such a proposition be understood ? Without insinuating that the suspicion would be correct, I may say, that the British cabinet would not be inexcusable, for suspecting that the proposition was entirely insincere ; that it was made for the purpose of being rejected ; and of being used, as it has been used, as a mean of further exasperating the American people, and of impelling them into that war, which Bonaparte enjoins, and to which their rulers so incessantly urge them.

The experiment, I fear, will never be made ; but there is every reason to believe, that a temper truly conciliatory on our part, would soon terminate honourably and advantageously, the differences between this country and Great Britain. Certainly the reverse of that temper has thus far been uniformly displayed.

A FARMER.

NO. VI.

THE conduct of France and Great Britain towards the United States, has now been examined with candor, and with as much detail as the limits necessarily prescribed for news-paper essays will admit.

The result is this—

That war upon neutral commerce, which violates too outrageously the sovereignty and rights of neutrals, to find a single open apologist, and to which our rulers ascribe those measures which have occasioned all our embarrassments, originated in the Berlin decree: The terms of that edict, unequivocally comprehend the United States. It was immediately carried into execution, by seizing the property of their citizens in neutral ports, and by captures made on the high seas. At the instance of her emperor, similar edicts were issued by his dependent governments, under which the vessels of the United States were captured and condemned. No satisfactory explanation of this decree was ever given, and none was received from authority, until near twelve months after its date, when the emperor, returning victorious from the war on the Vistula, declared that, as the decree itself contained no exception in favour of any nation, none could be made in its execution.

During this time, the United States, far from manifesting any disposition to resist this flagrant invasion of their rights, gave no evidence of uneasiness at it.— Their resentments were directed exclusively against the nation this measure was intended to crush.

The thrust which wounded neutrals, was professedly aimed at Great Britain, and must, if not parried, reach her through them. Her determination to retaliate it, was immediately declared, and the United States were solicited in friendly and respectful terms, to render this retaliation through them unnecessary, by resisting, themselves, this unprecedented attack on their sovereignty. These solicitations being unavailing, orders were issued soon after the declaration of the emperor, which placed France and her allies in a state of blockade. These orders contain exceptions, which tolerate an ex-

tensive neutral trade, prohibited by the decree they profess to retaliate.

This measure was the signal for others on the part of France, which, among many atrocities, subject to capture and condemnation every American vessel that has been visited by a British cruiser. Should the vessel so visited be even laden with American produce, and be bound to a French port, she will derive no protection from those circumstances.

When it is recollected, that British cruisers cover the ocean, and that the right of a belligerent to visit all merchantmen is unquestionable, is one which the merchant has neither the right nor the power to resist, this is equivalent to an order for the condemnation of every American vessel which navigates the ocean, if found either on the high seas or in a port under the controul of France.

That France, in the very act of condemning American vessels for being visited by British cruisers, exercises herself the right inhibited to others, would be worthy of notice, were it not that her whole conduct, with respect to the liberty of the seas, is in such direct opposition to her professions, exhibits such an uniform course of violence and tyranny, that we are surprised at no contradiction, however palpable—at no atrocity, however enormous.

If an outrage like this, could be aggravated by any circumstances whatever, those circumstances may be found in the manner in which it has been executed, and in the accompanying declarations of the government, from which it proceeds. Our vessels are burnt upon the high seas—our sailors imprisoned as enemies—our property, trusted to their country under the faith of treaties, is sequestered to secure our future obedience—our nation is transferred in secret treaty—and we are ordered to enter into a war, the object of which is, the extermination of LIBERTY !

Could the feelings, which these enormities must excite in the bosom of every American patriot, be rendered still more pungent, that effect would be produced by the reflection, that they proceed from a government, whose friendship the United States have uniformly

courted, with an assiduity often approaching to meanness, and whose forbearance they have long sought to purchase, by sacrifices extremely burdensome and dangerous to themselves

Against which of these powers would national honor direct the energies of the United States ?

To an American statesman, guiding at this crisis the councils of his country, it cannot be unimportant, that, by co-operating with France, our exertions will be employed in effecting the subjugation of the world, and of ourselves. By pursuing the opposite course, we contribute to preserve what yet remains of independence for other nations, and to secure our own. By entering into the views of Bonaparte, we are riveting the chains of those whom he has already bound, and preparing fetters for ourselves, as well as for others who yet remain free. By counteracting those views, we take the last chance for retaining on our earth a single vestige of national or individual liberty.

But I forbear to urge this consideration, because my enquiry is not, what does national safety demand, but what does national honour exact ? Can national honor exact a co-operation with that power which has started first, and has so greatly outstripped its adversary in this flagitious course of injustice ? Which, in its diplomatic intercourse, adopts the language, not of a sovereign treating with a sovereign, but of a superior dictating to an inferior ? Which commands us to make war, and seizes our property to enforce obedience ? Whose known object is the subjugation of the world ?

To those, who seek to diminish the odium, which, in the minds of independent and unprejudiced men, must be attached to our present system, by suggesting that it is equal resistance to all the belligerents, the answer is obvious. The belligerents are not equal offenders. The one has voluntarily attacked us ; the other has entered into the disagreeable contest reluctantly, and in self defence. The one has carried her outrages to the utmost of her power ; the other, with much more ability for immediate injury, has limited her retaliation to measures much less violent than those adopted by her adversary. The one declares her determination to adhere

to her system until she shall establish principles, which will totally change the law of nations, and commands us to unite with her in establishing those principles by force ; the other, declares her determination to abandon the system so soon as her enemy shall cease to use it as an instrument of war ; and only asks us to take measures, which shall prevent its operating on ourselves to her prejudice.

But, above all, it is not equal resistance to both belligerents.

It has been already said, that the power and resources of Great Britain depend on commerce. To destroy her commerce, although that of France must be suspended by the attempt, is the openly avowed object of the tyrant, at whose frown the world trembles. To this object his whole system is directed, and he has compelled all those over whom his power extends, to adopt it. In terms not to be misunderstood, he has commanded the United States to enter into it ; and, to coerce obedience, has not held the rod suspended over us, he has scourged us with it. The embargo is considered by him as entering into this coalition, and in his *expose* he ranks us with his vassal neighbours—but the rod is not yet laid aside. Further and more decisive measures must be adopted.

It is then apparent, that this whole work of self-destruction ; this whole system of annihilating commerce, whether it takes the form of embargo, non-intercourse, or war, is indeed hostility to England, but is co-operation with France. It is a co operation, entered into under the influence of menace and of punishment.

Does national honour demand this ruinous sacrifice ? Nay, more, can national honour endure it ? The train of reasoning which can lead to this opinion, is as difficult to conceive, as it is unworthy of refutation. To a really independent American, it must be clear as the sun at mid-day, that no course can be more humiliating, none more degrading to the nation, than that we are pursuing. It is the system which France has prescribed, and our rulers leave no hope of its terminating. On the floor of congress, the declaration is unreservedly made, that it must be pursued to the extremity of war. War alone

can degrade us still lower, by carrying our obedience still further than the abandonment of commerce has carried it.

I shall not trespass on the patience of the public, by many remarks on the influence, which the revolutions in Spain and Portugal ought to have on our conduct. The time has been, when every American bosom would have kindled into a sympathetic flame, in favour of a nation's struggling to preserve its freedom against treachery and violence; but that time is past, never I fear to return. That love of liberty, which once glowed in our bosoms, is extinguished by our hate of England, or chilled by the terror, which Bonaparte inspires. That hate of despotism, for which we were once distinguished, ceases when Bonaparte is the despot. The victories of liberty afflict us, when they are obtained over the myrmidons of Bonaparte, or when the cause of freedom is upheld by Britain or her allies, our character seems radically changed.

To withhold from Spain and Portugal, struggling against despotism in its most odious form, those important supplies, with which a free commerce would furnish them, is not only unnecessarily injurious to ourselves, but is aiding the cause of tyrants. To divest ourselves of the common right of pursuing our ordinary commercial intercourse with nations under such circumstances, is not only an abandonment of national interest, but a dereliction of national character and of national honour. It will long be remembered, by those who feel its hostility and discern its motive, and will, I fear, open to us "an Iliad of woes."—I forbear to press this subject further.

By those who have plunged their country into these calamities, and who are burying the recollection of the past under still more afflicting ruin, it is asked, what other course could have been taken, and what other course can now be taken?

We may look back to the past for instruction, how to avoid future errors. The course which ought to have been taken, is that which was prescribed by national honour and by national interest. It is that which was honourably and successfully pursued, under similar cir-

circumstances, in 1793. Instead of fomenting differences with a power, whose dispositions were friendly, by demanding pertinaciously the concession of principles, which that power dares not yield, and of endeavouring to pave the way for hostilities by non-intercourse laws and proclamations, we ought, on the publication of the Berlin decree, to have taken the manly ground of a truly independent nation. We ought instantly to have asserted our rights firmly, and with moderation, by a judicious use of the best means we had the power to employ. We ought openly to have declared our determination to resist the execution of that decree, and we ought to have prepared to resist it. Nothing short of an explicit declaration from authority, that its provisions, though so expressed as to comprehend all neutrals, should not comprehend the United States, ought to have restrained our government from arming, and from authorising our merchant vessels to arm for the protection of commerce. This course was exacted by national honour, and had it been pursued, we should have escaped both disgrace and ruin. We should never have been embarrassed by the retaliating orders of Britain, or by our own embargo and non-intercourse experiments. The letter of Mr. Decres ought not to have beguiled us for an instant, from this plain path. That letter could never have deceived a government which did not court deception. The decree itself, and the manner in which it was executed at Hamburgh and elsewhere, spoke a language too plain and intelligible, to have been obscured by the evasive conjectures of Mr. Decres, had we not carefully shunned the light, and anxiously sought a bandage for our own eyes.

But if our own solicitude to obviate the resentments of Bonaparte, might apologize for not making immediate resistance ; if it might even excuse our tame acquiescence in his withholding from November 1806 till October 1807, not only that voluntary communication on so interesting a subject, which decent respect for a neutral and friendly power required, but any answer to the applications we must have made in the mean time, for a favourable interpretation of his decree, what can be said to palliate the disgraceful and ruinous step which we took when his decision reached us ?

On receiving the official declaration of the emperor, that his decree contained no exception in favour of the United States, and that, consequently, none could be made in its execution, ought a doubt to have remained respecting the line of conduct, which America was bound by the high obligations of national honour and national independence to adopt? Between resistance and submission, the nation had to elect. Our government chose the latter. Instead of arming to defend our commerce, our rulers surrendered it. They obeyed as far as they could obey, the mandate of his imperial majesty. They took the first step towards stopping our trade with England. The suspension of our trade with France also, was inevitably the consequence of arresting our commerce with England. It could not have been prosecuted without great danger, and with the facts then in possession of our rulers, such a naked act of obedience, had they even been inclined to it, would have been a surrender of independence too undisguised to be safe.

Let it be recollected, that, at this time, the retaliating orders of Britain were unknown to us, and, consequently, our conduct was the same, and ought to have been the same, as if those orders had never existed. In such a state of things, instead of adopting a system which conformed to the imperious mandate of Napoleon; which wore the aspect of obedience; which has been treated in congress as a measure intended to coerce Great Britain, rather than France; and which has been considered by the emperor as partially making common cause with the continent of Europe, we ought to have made a firm stand in defence of rights, which we could only surrender with our independence, and have directed our resistance exclusively against the invader of them.

Had we then armed for self-protection, how different would have been our present situation. It may be safely affirmed, that on receiving information of this fact, Britain would instantly have revoked her orders of council. When it is recollected, that she adopted these orders simply as a measure of retaliation on France, which she justified by our non-resistance of the Berlin decree, it will not be denied, that we might, without loss of reputation, have suspended hostilities against her, until

she could act with a knowledge of our resistance ; or we might have imposed an embargo, to continue until her conduct should determine ours. The most punctilious honour would not have felt itself wounded by this procedure, because our measures of resistance to the invasion of our independence by France, having been taken without knowledge of the retaliating orders of England, would have been exempt from the suspicion of being influenced by those orders. Nor would there have been any difficulty in revoking any measure of precaution or resistance, which we might have adopted, when the order on which such measure had been founded was revoked.

So plain a path could never have been mistaken, had we not unfortunately selected for our guides the blindest passions and the most inveterate prejudices. But the important and more intricate question is, what measures ought now to be adopted ?

Easy as it was to escape the distressing embarrassments into which our rulers have plunged the nation, it is not easy to extricate ourselves from them. The course, however, though difficult, is not impracticable. To perceive distinctly the error we have committed, is doing much towards correcting that error. Our first false step, was that long acquiescence in the Berlin decree, which preceded the declaration made by the emperor in the autumn of 1807. A second, and still less excusable error, was, that when we did act, our measures wore the aspect of submission to that decree, rather than of resistance to it.

It is by the abandonment of error, not by a perseverance in it, that its most mischievous consequences are to be obviated. If a conduct, the reverse of that which we have pursued, would have saved us from our present ruinous embarrassments, reversing that conduct even now, affords the fairest prospect of relieving us from the worst consequences of those embarrassments.

The question whether our acquiescence in the Berlin decree, was such as to justify the retaliating orders of Britain, is one which can never be decided. It is one, on which the two nations can never be expected to concur in sentiment. But in this all reasonable men will

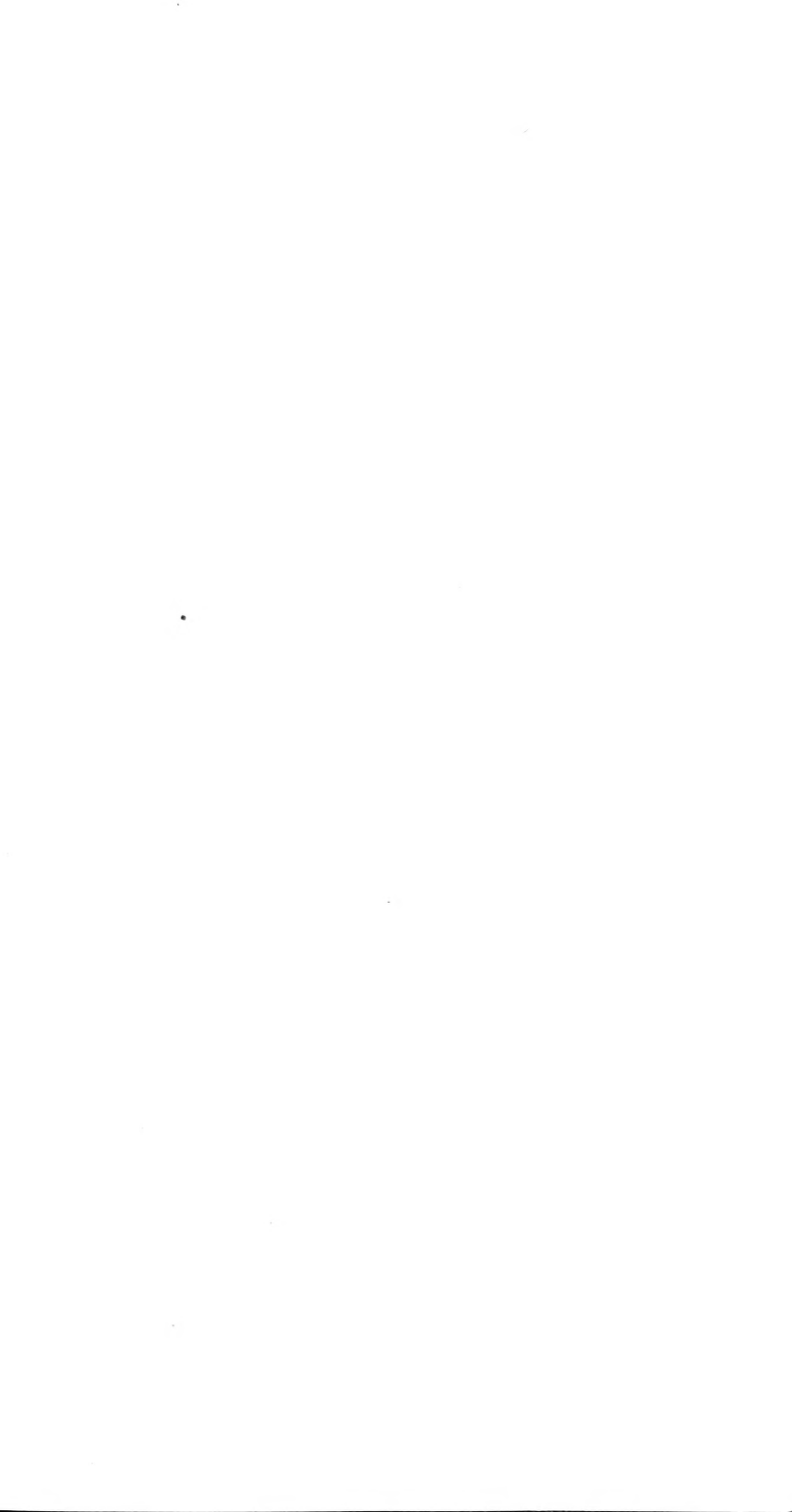
concur : Our whole conduct was of a character to furnish the British cabinet with such grounds for the opinion on which they acted ; the motives to which that nation ascribes her conduct are such ; such is the evidence which supports those motives ; and such her situation in the war, that, without being over credulous, we may believe that her measures are not dictated by a temper unfriendly to the United States, or dangerous to our independence, but by that real necessity, which surrounding dangers and the previous violence of her enemy have created. She has not of choice adopted that system, to which we ascribe our abandonment of the ocean. It is the system of France, and France exacts from us an active observance of it.

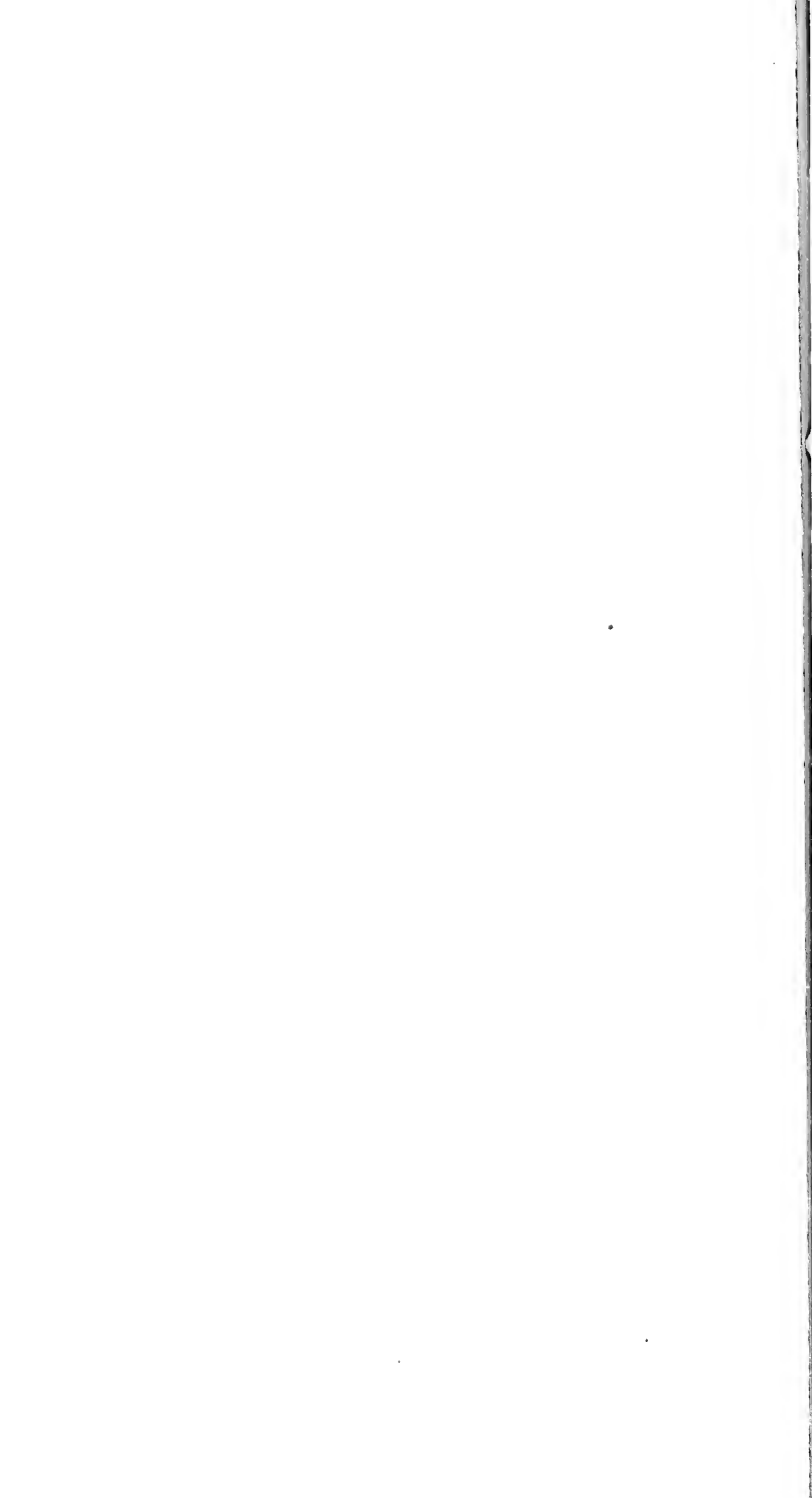
Under these circumstances, our differences with Britain present a case for fair and honourable negotiation: Would our rulers enter into that negotiation in the true spirit of conciliation, it could not fail to prove successful. If upon the removal of the orders of council, we would do that which our interests, our honour, our independence, imperiously demanded, before these orders were known to us—resist effectually the attack on that independence, which Napoleon has made, no doubt can be entertained, but that these orders would be removed.

This true spirit of conciliation has never been displayed in any negotiation between our administration and England. On the contrary, our conduct has uniformly manifested our fears, that the restoration of amicable intercourse with that nation, would be the signal for war from France. If we continue to act on the same principles, that war which the emperor commands us to wage cannot be remote ; and our old men, who now witness our dishonour, may live to see us, in regular gradation, the allies, the vassals, and the subjects of France—may live to see our LIBERTIES extinguished, and our INDEPENDENCE lost !

A FARMER.

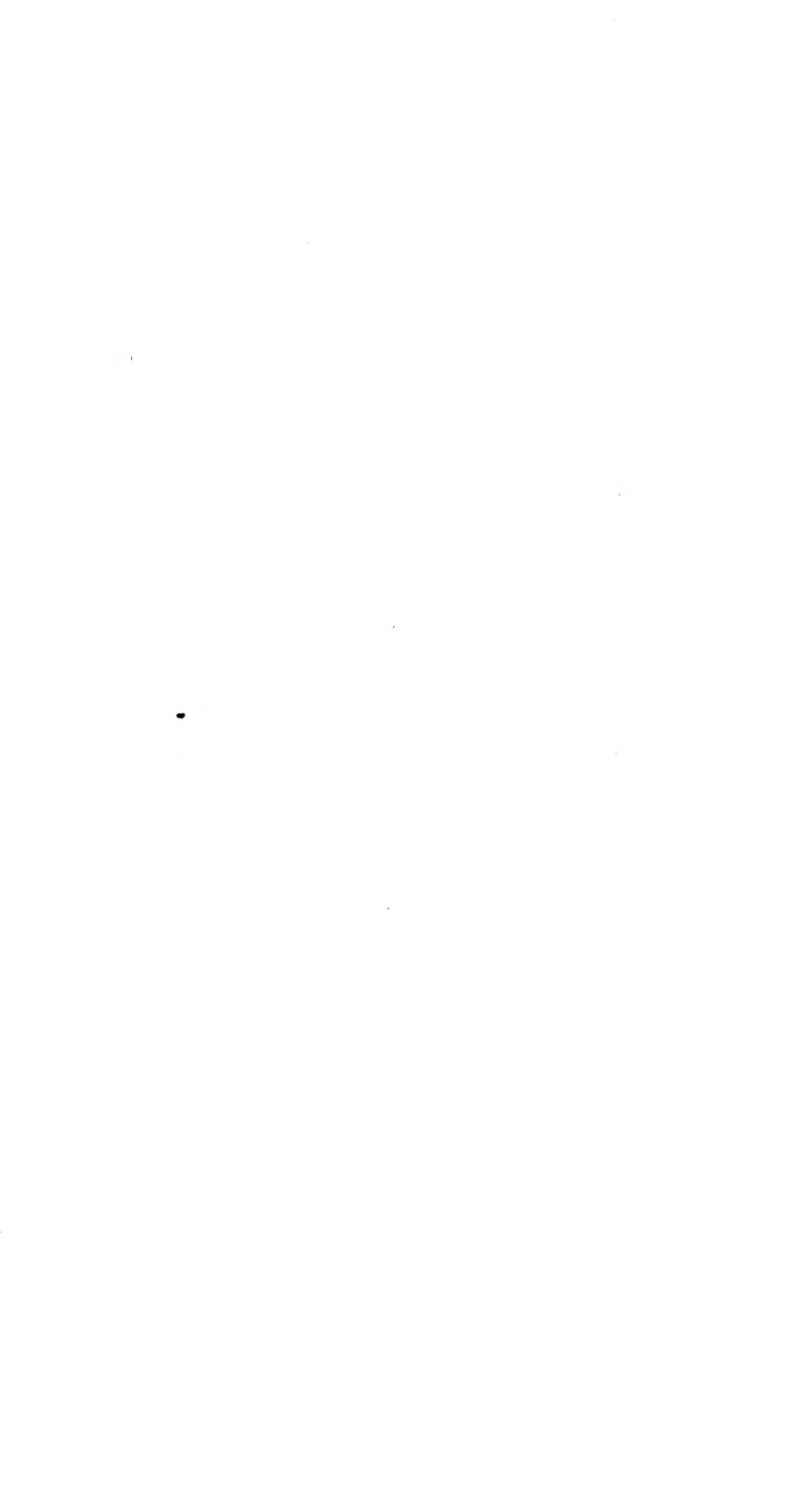












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